

Structural Adjustment and Political Legitimacy

***A Study of Economic Policies and
Regime Breakdown in Côte d'Ivoire
1981-2002***

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List of Acronyms

| | |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AfDB | African Development Bank |
| BCEAO | <i>Banque centrale des états de l'Afrique de l'Ouest</i> Central Bank of West African States |
| CAISTAB | <i>Caisse de stabilisation</i> Price Stabilization Fund |
| CARE | <i>Crédit d'ajustement et de relance économique</i> Adjustment and Economic Recovery Credit |
| CASA | <i>Crédit d'ajustement du secteur agricole</i> Agricultural Sector Adjustment Credit |
| CAS-DSP | <i>Crédit d'ajustement sectoriel pour le développement du secteur privé</i> Adjustment Credit for Private Sector Development |
| CFA | <i>Communauté financière d'Afrique</i> African Financial Community |
| CIE | <i>Compagnie ivoirienne d'électricité</i> Ivorian Electricity Company |
| CNSP | <i>Comité national de salut public</i> National Committee for Public Salvation |
| CURDIPHE | <i>Cellule universitaire de recherche et de diffusion des idées et actions du</i> <i>Président Henri Konan Bédié</i> University Cell for the Research and Diffusion of the Ideas and Actions of Henri Konan Bédié |
| FASR | <i>Facilité d'ajustement renforcée</i> Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility |
| FESCI | <i>Fédération estudiantine et scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire</i> Student Federation of Côte d'Ivoire |
| FN | <i>Forces nouvelles</i> New Forces |
| FPI | <i>Front populaire ivoirien,</i> Ivorian Popular Front |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |

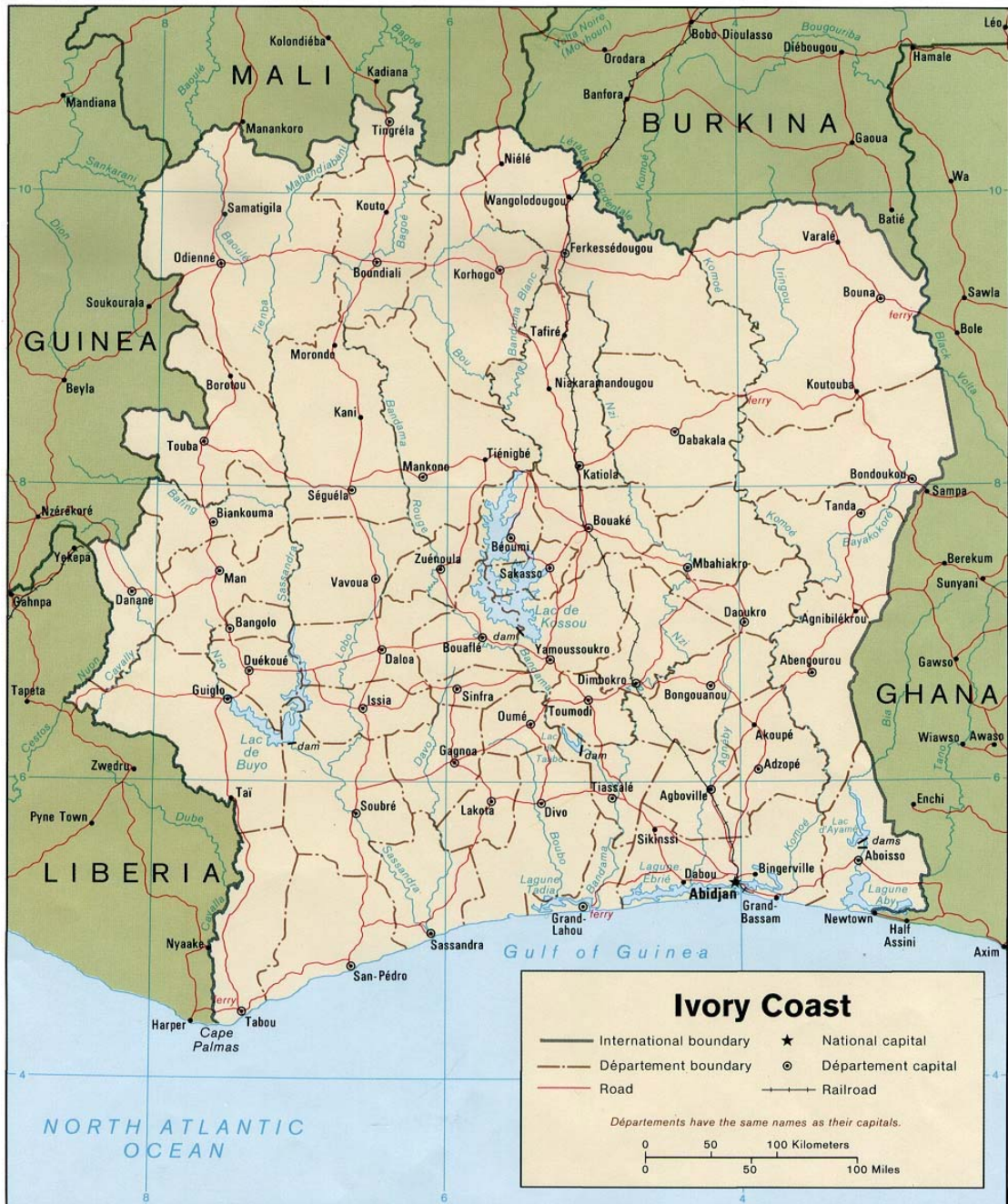
| | |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| GPP | <i>Groupement des patriotes pour la paix</i> Patriotic Grouping for Peace |
| IFI | International Financial Institution |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| INS | <i>Institut national de la statistique</i> National Statistics Institute |
| LIDHO | <i>Ligue ivoirien des droits de l'homme</i> Ivorian Human Rights League |
| MEECI | <i>Mouvement des étudiants et élèves de Cote d'Ivoire</i> Student Movement of Côte d'Ivoire |
| MPCI | <i>Mouvement patriotique de la Côte d'Ivoire</i> Patriotic Movement of Côte d'Ivoire |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| PAS | <i>Programme d'ajustement structurel</i> Structural Adjustment Program |
| PASA | <i>Programme d'ajustement du secteur agricole</i> Adjustment Program of the Agricultural Sector |
| PASCO | <i>Programme d'ajustement sectoriel pour la compétitivité et la réforme du cadre réglementaire</i> Adjustment Program for Competition and Regulatory Reform |
| PASE | <i>Programme d'ajustement sectoriel de l'énergie</i> Adjustment Program of Energy Sector |
| PASEA | <i>Programme d'ajustement de l'eau et assainissement,</i> Adjustment Program of Water and Sanitation |
| PASFI | <i>Programme d'ajustement sectoriel du secteur financier</i> Adjustment Program of the Financial Sector |
| PIT | <i>Parti ivoirien des travailleurs</i> Ivorian Workers' Party |
| PDCI | <i>Parti démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire</i> Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire |
| PRSP | Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper |
| PVRH | <i>Programme de valorisation des ressources humaines</i> |

| | |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Program of Promotion of Human Resources |
| RDR | <i>Rassemblement des républicains</i> Rally of Republicans |
| SAP | Structural Adjustment Program |
| SODECI | <i>Société de distribution d'eau de la Côte d'Ivoire</i> Water Distribution Company of Côte d'Ivoire |
| SYNARES | <i>Syndicat national de la recherche et l'enseignement supérieur</i> National Union of Research and Higher Education |
| UDPCI | <i>Union pour la démocratie et la paix de la Côte d'Ivoire</i> Union for Democracy and Peace in Côte d'Ivoire |
| UEMOA | <i>Union économique et monétaire ouest africaine</i> West African Economic and Monetary Union |
| UNDP | United Nation Development Program |
| UNECA | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa |
| UPLT-CI | <i>Union pour la libération totale de la Côte d'Ivoire</i> Union for the Total Liberation of Côte d'Ivoire |
| USD | <i>Union des sociaux-démocrates</i> Union of Social Democrats |
| VAT | Value Added Tax |

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Map of Côte d'Ivoire



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1. Introduction: From a harbor of peace to civil war

On September 19, 2002, Côte d'Ivoire experienced a military mutiny attempting to oust President Laurent Gbagbo from power, while at the same time rebel groups attacked and progressively took hold of the northern half of the country's territory. What at first sight seemed as a mere soldier uprising, soon revealed a deep political conflict which held the potential to threaten both the peace and, according to some views, the territorial integrity of the country. The conflict brought Côte d'Ivoire, previously known as a harbor of peace and stability in the region, to the international fore. While some reacted with surprise and shock, others interpreted these events simply as the inevitable culmination of tensions that had been developing for decades, and which had accelerated with the coup d'état in December 1999. The current crisis compels us to examine the conditions under which the country has moved from stability to a situation of deep political crisis and instability. What explains the political breakdown? Through which processes, and based on which factors, have legitimacy, trust, and stability turned to political turmoil and civil war?

Most literature today points to ethnic conflicts, tensions between the local population and immigrants, or external influences as the main factors explaining the political breakdown in Côte d'Ivoire. The past decades have, however, also seen a deterioration of economic conditions, increasing poverty and unemployment as well as the development of larger gaps in resources in the country. Easterly (2001:202; 206) label the country as having had one of the world's biggest economic collapses since 1978. Several academic contributions emphasize the importance of economic developments for the direction and sustainability of political change. It is also widely assumed that Structural Adjustment Programs, which in the case of Côte d'Ivoire were first implemented in 1981, may have wide-ranging effects on social conditions in developing countries. However, few have looked closer at the importance of economic conditions for the political breakdown in trust and legitimacy in Côte d'Ivoire. While several academics have focused on the economic effects of structural

adjustment policies, few have looked directly at the political sustainability and stability of the programs. On that background, this thesis discusses to what extent and how the political breakdown can be illuminated by economic developments and policies.

1.1 Background

In sharp contrast to its neighbors in the region, Côte d'Ivoire was for several years regarded as an African success story with relative economic progress and political stability. The country experienced a remarkable economic growth in the first two decades of independence, and achieved a level of welfare that was impressive when compared to its neighboring countries. The country's first president, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, managed to maintain an image as the "Father of the Nation" who provided for the welfare of the people, and enjoyed a high popularity throughout his presidency, which lasted until his death in 1993. Although there was resistance, and it was sometimes brutally repressed¹, the president managed to keep potential challengers to his regime on a distance, primarily through peaceful means². Internationally, Houphouët was regarded by many as a "Man of Peace" (Sirieux 1975).

After the death in 1993 of president Houphouët-Boigny, the authority of the his party, the *Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)*, deteriorated dramatically, and Houphouët-Boigny's successor Henri Konan Bédié was far from obtaining the strong personal position of his predecessor. Political tension and social protest, which had been growing during the 1980s in response to growing economic hardships and political repression, accelerated under Bédié.

In 1990 pressure from the opposition coupled with international pressure for democratization led to the legalization of opposition parties, and the first multiparty election were held in October 1990. The transition to multipartyism created a new

¹ See chapter 2.

² These, however, often involved "buying off" opponents by offering them positions in his party

situation where the country's high proportion of immigrants for the first time gave rise to major political controversies.

With multiparty elections, the right to vote suddenly gained importance. Traditionally, African immigrants had enjoyed the right to vote even without citizenship. This group was known to be among Houphouët-Boigny's most loyal supporters. The opposition, led by Laurent Gbagbo and his *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI) thus protested when Houphouët wanted to maintain the right to vote for African immigrants, whereas neither non-African immigrants nor Ivoirians residing abroad, two groups expected to be critical of the ruling party, were given the same right. Political debates now increasingly came to center on questions of origin and the relationship between "Ivoirians by birth" and "foreigners".

When President Bédié faced declining support, he introduced the concept of Ivoirité, or "Ivoirianness", to enhance a sense of pride in being Ivoirian. This was used as a tool for further stigmatization of foreign groups, and increasingly also of Ivoirians of the Northern part of the country, who largely belong to the same population and language groups as immigrants from Burkina Faso and Mali.

Before the presidential elections in 1995, a law was passed that prevented people who were not "pure-blood" Ivoirians to stand for election. This was interpreted as a move to exclude Alassane Dramane Ouattara, the leader of the *Rassemblement de Républicains* (RDR), to stand for president. The RDR had been created after a split in the ruling party following the death of Houphouët, and had become the biggest opposition party. Ouattara's supporters now started mobilizing people of the North by claiming that Ouattara had been excluded because he was a northerner and a Muslim, adding further to inter-group tensions.

Before the elections in 1995, the two main opposition parties, the RDR and the FPI, launched an "Active Boycott" and refused to pose candidates for the presidency, leaving Bédié as the only realistic candidate. In December 1999 Bédié was overthrown in a military coup d'état. This coup brought General Robert Gueï, former chief of the armed forces, to power for a transition period. In the subsequent elections

in October 2000, Laurent Gbagbo of the FPI was elected, although General Gueï himself tried to capture the power by interrupting the counting of votes and announcing himself as victor. Mass demonstrations and unrest resulted in the appointment of Gbagbo as president, in accordance with the election result. However, like in 1995, the election had been boycotted by two of the major parties, this time by the PDCI and the RDR, and the voter turnout was only 56 percent (Crook 1997:235). Two years later, the FPI government was attacked by what later became known as “the rebellion”, and the country was thrown into civil war.

In the course of the past two decades, Côte d’Ivoire has thus moved from an economic prosperity and political stability remarkable in an African context, towards increasing political tension and social protest and to the present-day warlike situation.

1.2 Economic Crisis and IFI reform policies

In the early 1980s, Côte d’Ivoire, like most other African countries, faced severe economic crisis with growing budget deficits and mounting foreign debts. The crisis was the combined result of a dramatic fall in world prices on primary commodities, growing interest rates on loans, and a strengthened dollar. Structural Adjustment programs, designed to reduce budget deficits and restore growth, were implemented at the initiative of International Financial Institutions (IFIs), notably the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). 38 African governments signed some 244 stabilization or adjustment loans with the World Bank and the IMF between 1980 and 1989 (Bratton and van de Walle 1997:132). Questions of the ability of the adjustment programs to create sustainable economic growth, to reduce poverty, and to promote social development have been at the core of the development debate since the introduction of the programs. There have also been heated debates on the programs’ effects on the relationships between debtor and creditor countries. In this thesis we look at what happens on the national level in a country undergoing adjustment. In what ways have structural adjustment policies influenced internal national political dynamics and political stability? Are democracy, legitimacy, and the accountability of political authorities strengthened or threatened by the adjustment

programs? While this study does not aspire to answer these questions, it is hoped that by examining central developments in Côte d'Ivoire following the reforms, it will be possible to shed some light on possible political consequences of economic reform.

The programs were aimed at restoring growth, and focused on improving the balance of payments, liberalizing trade, and reducing the role of the state in the economy (World Bank 1994). Devaluation of currencies, the removal of tariffs and subsidies, encouragement of export production, privatization of public enterprises, and public sector reforms were among the major policy measures (ibid.). From the World Bank's perspective, the reforms represented a shift from a developmental paradigm focused on state-led industrialization to an economic model relying on market mechanisms and on export promotion as the engine of growth (ibid.).

Although the term structural adjustment is no longer used to describe current programs, the policies from the adjustment period is still carried on, though from the 1990s there has been a heavier emphasis on social development and on governance issues. From 1999 many African countries have signed so-called Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) with the World Bank and the IMF.³ These programs are directly oriented towards poverty reduction and aim at participatory processes in the countries concerned. The fundamental policy orientations of previous programs have, however, not been challenged, and critics have largely seen the PRSPs as a continuation of the structural adjustment policies. The debate on structural adjustment is thus still highly relevant both because of continued policies and because the effects of earlier policies are important to understand today's economic and political developments.

Côte d'Ivoire introduced its first structural adjustment program in 1981, and economic austerity became harsher towards the end of the 1980s, in response to deteriorating terms of trade and growing budget deficits. Main adjustment policies

³ In Côte d'Ivoire a PRSP program was presented in September 2002, only weeks before the military mutiny. The process has since been stalled because of the political crisis.

included public spending austerity measures, strict monetary policies to limit inflation, as well as rationalization of the industrial, agricultural, and energy sectors (Schneider 1991:27f). It was, however, towards the end of the 1980s and into the 1990s that the consequences of adjustment became visible to the public and that structural adjustment became a major political issue in the country. As economic austerity measures became harsher, including major salary reductions and controversial privatizations, public protest against them grew. These protests became an important factor in the mobilization against the single party regime that finally led to the announcement of multiparty elections in May 1990. In October 1990 President Houphouët-Boigny appointed the former IMF official Alassane Ouattara to the new post of prime minister, to further economic reform. The severe economic reform measures that he became responsible for, as well as harsh repression of the opposition, contributed to vehement protests by the opposition, with the FPI and Gbagbo in front.

Although many have studied the economic adjustment process in Côte d'Ivoire, few have looked directly at its impact on political contestation and conflict. In light of the current crisis these questions have gained new relevance. This thesis hence addresses the political dimension of the adjustment process in order to deepen our understanding of political tensions which have made possible a development from stability to breakdown. There are two main reasons for focusing on the political effects of economic reforms.

First, economic reform is an aspect of the development of conflict that has been given relatively little attention in the debates on the Ivorian crisis (Campbell 2003:1f). Although there are several other more visible aspects of the crisis, in order to get a deeper understanding of the crisis it is crucial to explore the underlying social conflicts. As will be shown below, social conflicts in Côte d'Ivoire in the 1990s have been intimately related to economic change and reform.

Second, the role of the Bretton Woods Institutions and their Structural Adjustment Programs has been at the core of debates on development in Africa since their

introduction in the early 1980s. However, these debates tend to focus the economic and social effects of the programs, whereas relatively less attention has been given to their potential political effects. African scholars have, however, often given more importance to political aspects of adjustment, such as the effects of adjustment on democratization, political legitimacy, and social conflict (See for example Olukoshi 1998, Mkandawire 1999). Côte d'Ivoire provides an example of an African country that has been undergoing far-reaching adjustment leading to major changes in the country's political economy. At the same time the country has recently experienced a dramatic political breakdown. The case of Côte d'Ivoire thus offers an opportunity to explore possible links between adjustment and political crisis. By exploring relationships between adjustment and crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, the study will contribute to the political aspect of the adjustment debate.

1.3 Focus and Starting Point: Ethnic Strives or Contentious Action?

The core explanation often highlighted for the growing political problems in Côte d'Ivoire is the use of identity manipulation by the elites, i.e. the political elites' use of concepts such as citizenship, ethnicity and religion for personal political gains. Others highlight that ethnic antagonisms in themselves provoked political conflicts that destabilized political processes. This thesis starts from the assumption that neither demographic or cultural changes nor changes in elite strategies can be studied in isolation from the economic changes that occurred in parallel in the country. Instead of solely studying elite strategies, we will in addition focus on the people. Moreover, rather than focusing predominantly on demographic variables, we will address developments in economic conditions, poverty, and the distribution of resources as possible additional explanations of breakdown.

From the early to mid-1990s, political debate in Côte d'Ivoire has increasingly focused on questions of identity and nationality. As a result, dichotomies such as "Ivorians versus immigrants", "northerners versus southerners", and "Christians versus Muslims" have developed, leading to the interpretation that the conflict is based on antagonisms caused by ethnic identity. Theoretical discussions on ethnic

conflict often evolve around the difference between *primordialists*, who see ethnic identity as fundamental, and subsequently a source of conflict between groups, and *instrumentalists*, who regard ethnic conflict rather as a result of ethnic manipulation by elites. Instrumentalist approaches fit well into common interpretations of the Ivorian conflict, where Bédié's concept of "Ivoirité" and Gbagbo's exclusionist notions of citizenship is put forward as causes of the political breakdown. This theoretical distinction is applied in the discussion of the conflict. Further, in approaching the conflict from an economical point of view, we will also investigate how ethnic conflict may be related to economic changes and policies.

The focus in this study is on political protest and violence as a consequence of breakdown in the political legitimacy of the government and the political system. The growing protests against the regime can be analyzed as contentious action, developing in a situation of declining legitimacy. According to Sidney Tarrow, contentious politics "occurs when ordinary people, often in league with more influential citizens, join forces in confrontations with elites, authorities, and opponents" (Tarrow 2003:2). Further, contentious politics emerges in response to changes in political opportunities and constraints (ibid). In that sense, not only changes in economic conditions ("grievance"), but likewise "opportunity" changes such as weakening of the government, divisions of the elites, and increasing presence of international financial institutions in Côte d'Ivoire during the 1980s and 1990s may have favored the rise of contention.

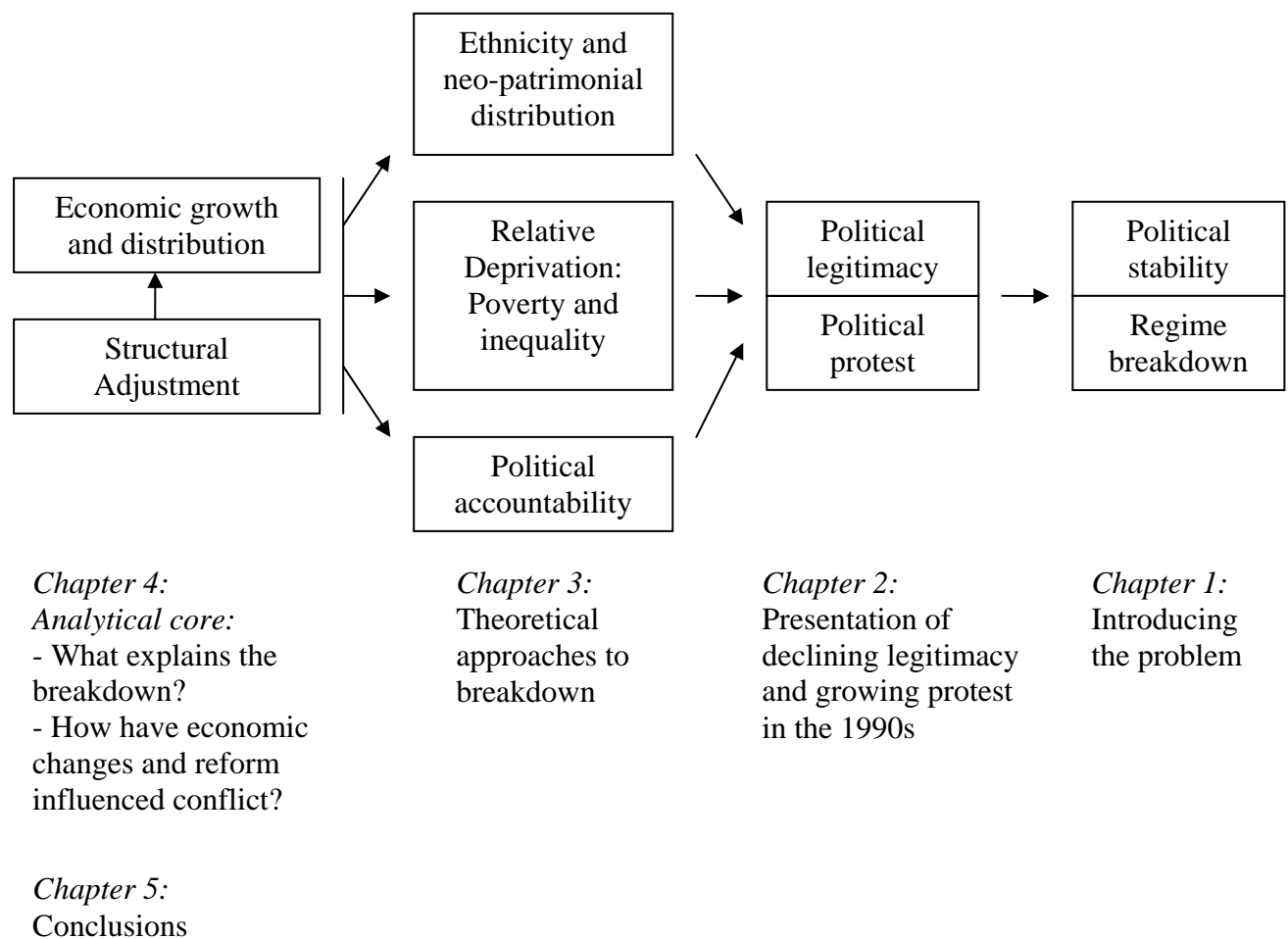
Contentious action as a response to changes in economic conditions can be analyzed with the help of relative deprivation theories. These regard political violence as a response to a discrepancy between people's material expectations and the opportunities they have to fulfill these expectations in reality. Economic changes do influence politics, but not in a deterministic or mechanical way. We hence need to study actual economic conditions, people's perception of these as well as their ability to organize and put forward their demands. In addition to looking at aggregate numbers of economic developments and poverty, we look at how economic changes affected different groups, and how these groups responded politically.

To sum up, we see the political breakdown as a result of a decline in the legitimacy of the rulers and the political system, which in turn manifested itself in increasing political protest. The aim of the study is to explore the reasons for the legitimacy crisis. Three theoretical perspectives are employed to shed light on the decline in legitimacy. First, different perspectives on ethnicity are discussed. In addition to the “classical” primordialist and instrumentalist approaches, perspectives that go further in placing ethnic identity in a socio-economical and political context are applied. These include theories on the neo-patrimonial state, which highlight the simultaneously integrating and disintegrating functions of economic distribution according to ethnic and other informal relations, and what happens when traditional distribution patterns are threatened by economic crisis. Second, we employ relative deprivation theories to explore the role of poverty and inequality in weakening legitimacy and spurring protest. Third, political accountability is discussed. This last point deals with the relations between the rulers and the ruled: To what extent and on what basis do leaders have to answer for their policies to the people? This is closely related to the role and capacity of political institutions. Finally, and moving to the core question of the study, we take a closer look at the economic changes that have been taking place, related to the economic crisis that hit the country in the 1980s and to the reforms introduced by the IFIs. Economic changes and reforms may have influenced the level of ethnic policies and distribution patterns as well as poverty and inequality and political accountability (see figure 1, p.10).

The general question addressed in the study may be formulated simply as: What explains the political breakdown? The main focus, however, is on how the breakdown can be illuminated by economic developments and economic policies. In order to answer the second question, it is necessary to have an understanding of the first.

Figure 1 is a visualization of the most important elements in the analysis and how they relate to each other. The figure should not be interpreted as a causal model; rather, the arrows in the model signalize that we want to discuss how one element influences the other. Below the figure it is shown how the different chapters deal with the different analytical elements.

Figure 1: Expected relations between economic change and breakdown



1.4 Methodological Approach: A Qualitative Case Study

The study is conducted as a qualitative case study. The case study is defined by Yin (1994:13) as “an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”. The phenomenon under study here is the political destabilization of Côte d’Ivoire. Since we look at developments leading to the rebellion in 2002, the study object is strictly speaking not contemporary. However, the recent character of the events, the complex character of the conflict, and the blurred boundaries between “phenomenon and context” make it fit for a case study.

The study asks typical “how” and “why” questions (ibid:6) like “*How* does transformation from trust, legitimacy, and stability to political turmoil and civil war take place?” “*Why* do political leaders choose to rely on ethnic politics?”, and “*How* do the structural adjustment programs affect political trust and legitimacy?”

The purpose of the study is to *explain* these developments. The case study is fit for this purpose because it makes it possible to employ a wide variety of evidence (documents, interviews, and observation) (Yin 1994:8) as well as to consider a wide range of variables (ibid:13) which is necessary to grasp such a complex phenomenon as that of the political destabilization of a country.

1.4.1 Fieldwork

The fieldwork was conducted from February 19 to March 30 2004 in Abidjan, preceded by a 10-day research stay at the CODESRIA Research Center in Dakar. It allowed me to access written information, conduct interviews, as well as to follow political events and debate over a period of time, thus giving me an understanding of the nature of the political crisis that would not have been possible without a stay of this duration.

The short time (one and a half years) between the rebellion and the fieldwork means that people will remember well the events as well as how it was in the years before the rebellion. Of course the more the conversations go back in the history, the more will the informants’ accounts and analysis of events be colored by their experiences after the time in question. We must be aware, for example, that political militants’ account of the mobilization against the single party regime will be influenced by their position in today’s conflict.

At the time of the fieldwork, the country was still divided in two between rebel- and government-controlled areas and was, at least officially, trying to implement the

Marcoussis Accord⁴ from January 2003. Although the country was generally calm during the period, the conflict issues were far from finding any solution, and the political situation remained extremely tense. The fieldwork thus gave me the opportunity to look closely into an ongoing conflict. The data collected during the fieldwork consist of interviews as well as primary and secondary sources such as statistics on economic performance and living conditions, newspaper articles, books, and academic articles. There was also an element of direct observation, especially connected to the home and the neighborhood where I lived, in Yopougon, the most populous, working class quarter in Abidjan. I was able to observe how people's lives were affected by the crisis and strategies they used to survive, as well as to listen to people's reactions to everyday events and discussions of the political situation. My presence as a foreigner and a student naturally influenced these situations to a certain extent, but the people I stayed with got used to my presence and did not change their behavior significantly, as far as I could judge. Language barriers posed a problem to direct observation. Although my French works well for leading conversations and discussions, following a discussion among "native" French speakers is a different matter, especially when they use slang, local expressions, and sometimes mix their French with their local language⁵.

Because of the security situation and time constraints, the fieldwork was limited to Abidjan. This is the administrative and economic center as well as the largest city, and where the great majority of relevant political actors and institutions as well as academics are found⁶. However, this gives the study a certain bias: While I had good access to people who had been active in the events in Abidjan, I did not have the chance to talk to people living in the northern Côte d'Ivoire, which is occupied by rebel movements. Neither did I have the chance to do interviews with people who had

⁴ The French-brokered Marcoussis-accord was signed by all the major political parties, including President Gbagbo of the FPI, and by the three rebel groups. It calls for the revision of the legislation about citizenship, extended eligibility for the presidency and for land reforms. It also prescribes the disarmament and the reunification of the country.

⁵ Most people in Abidjan use French for everyday use as well as "official" matters. Most people have, however, an other language as their mother tongue, which they use among family and others who have the same language, often in a mix with French.

⁶ the University of Bouaké, the second largest city, have transferred its activities to the University of Cocody, Abidjan, after the former city's occupation by rebel movements

been a part of the conflicts in the forest zone. Likewise, conversations about economic reforms focused on the effects in the cities and less on the consequences in rural areas. However, considering the importance of the forest zone conflicts, as well as the impact that economic reforms have had in rural areas, I have still chosen to include them in the analysis. The analysis of the land issue and conflicts in the forest zone is thus based primarily on secondary sources.

Primary written sources consist of official documentation and statistics on economic developments, social developments, and structural adjustment in Côte d'Ivoire.

Secondary written sources that are addressed are, among others: analyses of the political developments in Côte d'Ivoire and of the political economy of Côte d'Ivoire, and other relevant historical accounts of the country. Further, literature on political crisis and civil war; economic reform; state- society relations in Africa; ethnicity and nationalism are addressed.

Altogether 25 *interviews* were conducted. These include political actors, government officials, World Bank and IMF officials, researchers, and political commentators. The interviews are essential to access some critical information of events that are not yet well-documented in written sources and to confirm information from other sources, but above all they are useful for the thorough understanding of the political conflict and the argumentation used by the different parties in the conflict. The interviews are of a semi-structured type. An interview guide with 22 questions was prepared before the fieldwork, and worked as a “checklist” for me to know what questions I needed the informants to answer. However, I usually started out by asking quite open questions to give the informants the opportunity to elaborate on the issues that were important to them. Usually it was not necessary for me to ask all the questions, many of them were in fact answered before I had had the time to ask. In some instances I also gave priority to additional information that I could get from listening to what the informants wanted to talk about rather than to follow my guide strictly. Usually,

however, I made sure to guide the conversation so that the major questions were answered.

I used a minidisk recorder at about half of the interviews. This gave me the chance to concentrate upon the conversation, and I did not get the impression that it disturbed the informant. In fact, my impression was that note-taking was more disturbing to the conversation, as the informants were made conscious of what elements of their answers I wrote down. None of the informants that were interviewed with a recorder expressed surprise when I asked about recording. At one instance, however, I was asked not to record. At the other instances where the recorder was not used, it was to avoid interruptions in an ongoing conversation, as many interviews started as informal conversations and moved gradually into the subject of the interview. The recorded interviews are of better quality than the non-recorded ones, as nuances and details could be lost in note-taking.

All the interviews were conducted in French. Although some of the informants would have been able to speak English, I chose to use French, as this is the official language and I considered it both most natural and most polite to address people in French. Although French is a foreign language to me, and I was not used to “West African” French, I found this to be a minor problem in the interview situation, where I was able to ask the informant to elaborate or explain if something was unclear. The quotes from interviews, as well as literature, in the text are all in my translation.

One contact worked as a key informant during the fieldwork, and set up nearly half of my interview appointments. He was a crucial resource both in introducing me to the intricate political landscape of the country and in giving me access to other informants. It would hardly have been possible without him, for instance, to interview some of the most central people both in the New Forces (the rebellion) and in the patriotic movements (the militias). In some instances it was also necessary that he joined in the interviews. This, however, also helped create a friendly atmosphere, which profited the interview.

There are two major methodological problems with the use of the key informant. Firstly, he chose interview objects, which obviously gave him considerable power. However, he was open to my suggestions both of people and organizations, and to his best capacity helped me get in touch with those I wanted to meet. I also deliberately countered this influence by using other contacts. Secondly, I often discussed the interviews with him afterwards, opening the possibility that my impressions were colored by his opinions. In the cases where my key informant participated in the interviews, there is a possibility that his presence influenced the informant. Yet this could also be positive, as I sometimes could get valuable additional information by listening to discussions between the two.

In the interviews with the representatives from the World Bank and the IMF as well as one civil servant, the Norwegian Embassy set up the appointment and an embassy representative was present at the interviews. My role as a student was, however, clear, and my impression is that the presence of the embassy did not influence the information significantly, although there is of course a possibility that the situation was influenced by the presence of a “third party”.

1.4.2 Methodological limitations

The role of economic policies in the evolution of conflict has been given relatively little attention, and the aim of this thesis is thus to explore the economic aspect of the development of conflict. This does not mean that we expect economic policies to be the single most important factor in explaining conflict in Côte d’Ivoire. Neither will our analysis allow us to measure the effect of economic policies compared to other factors. Rather, it is an attempt at shedding light on one little discussed aspect of the crisis. One reason to regard economic factors as interesting in analyzing the conflict in Côte d’Ivoire is theoretical: On the basis of earlier research we assume changes in economic developments and policies to be essential to understand political change. What this analysis may allow us to do is therefore at best to *strengthen our assumption* of the relation between reform and conflict, by pointing to the *mechanisms* through which reforms have influenced conflict. It has thus been

essential to address as many sources as possible that may show these mechanisms. Equally important, however, is to search actively for sources that contradict our assumptions, and then consider our other findings in the light of contradicting views (Yin 1994).

While this thesis will shed light on the impact of economic developments, we do not intend to blame the IMF and the World Bank for the political breakdown. Economic reforms were needed in Côte d'Ivoire in the 1980s on the background of the country's deep economic crisis, including a growing debt burden and subsequent budget deficits. Furthermore, the adjustment programs that governments agreed to are poor indicators of their ability, or willingness, to actually enter into reform (Bratton and van de Walle 1997). As such, the reactions often perceived to be in response to the economic reforms, may as well have been a consequence of the economic crisis itself. The thesis attempts, however, to examine how the strategies chosen to deal with the crisis related to the political realities and influenced them. Through this process, it is hoped that the thesis can contribute to a better understanding of the political aspects of adjustment.

2. Background of Côte d'Ivoire

The death of president Houphouët-Boigny in December 1993 marked the end of a period of political stability exceptional in African post-colonial history. Not only had Côte d'Ivoire been ruled by the same president and the same party for 33 years, but political conflict and protest against the government had been kept at very low levels compared to many other African countries, even though this had begun to change towards the end of the 1980s. The recent political breakdown compels us to examine the characteristics of one-party rule in Côte d'Ivoire, of the opposition movement that emerged to challenge it, and of the democratic transition that started a few years before the death of the "Old Man". Likewise, demographic and economic developments shed light on the political developments leading to crisis. This chapter starts by a brief account of political events from colonial times up to the coup d'état of 1999 (2.1). Chapter 2.3 and 2.4 present central demographic and economic developments, which are crucial to understanding the development of conflict in the 1990s. Finally, Chapter 2.4 describes the development of nationalism and rising social tensions leading to breakdown.

2.1 Political Background: From Colony to Multiparty System

Côte d'Ivoire became a French colony in 1893, and hence a part of French West Africa. The French developed a plantation economy with the export of coffee, cocoa and other agricultural products. To meet the demand for labor, the system of forced labor was introduced, and a large-scale migration program from Upper Volta (present Burkina Faso) followed. The colonial power prioritized the economic development of Côte d'Ivoire, which had good natural conditions for agriculture especially in the Southern part, as well as access to the sea. Côte d'Ivoire thus continued to attract immigration from the dryer countries in the Sahel, even after independence.

Félix Houphouët-Boigny, the leader of the Ivorian African Planters Union, came to represent the French African colonies as Africans started to get a limited influence in

colonial politics after World War II. He became the most influential African member of the French parliament, and even occupied ministerial posts. In 1946 he was the proponent of the bill that abolished forced labor in the colonies, an achievement that added to his popularity and status in Côte d'Ivoire and the rest of French West Africa.

In 1958, under de Gaulle's leadership, the French Community was established, in which the colonies obtained greater internal autonomy. Referenda were organized in the colonies to choose between membership in the Community and total independence, and Guinea was the only colony to refuse de Gaulle's Community, thus becoming the first French colony to become formally independent. Houphouët-Boigny stood forth as a key proponent for the Community, and clearly preferred this structure to total independence (Zolberg:233ff; Siriex:188ff). But with Ghana's independence in 1957 and Guinea following in 1958, the move towards independence was inevitable. Côte d'Ivoire thus became an independent republic on August 7, 1960.

The period from 1945 to independence had seen the development of various political parties and interest organizations and growing political competition in Côte d'Ivoire. Already before independence, however, the trend towards growing competition was reversed and the power was increasingly concentrated around one party, the *Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire* (PDCI) of Houphouët-Boigny. In the April 1959 elections, 100 candidates stood for the 100 seats, all on the PDCI list (Amundsen 1997: 306). Helped by the electoral system and the already established position of the party's leader as representative to the French Legislative Assembly, the PDCI also led a deliberate coalition-building strategy across ethnic and regional cleavages. The party managed to attract upcoming cadres, because they increasingly controlled access to positions and resources (ibid:310).

Maintaining close ties with the former colonial power was a major priority for the independent Côte d'Ivoire under Houphouët, and French private investment and technical cooperation in the public sector was encouraged (Mundt 1995:14). The economic structure from the colonial period was maintained, prioritizing the

agricultural sector. The export of cocoa, coffee, and timber provided the pillars of the economy and the basis for economic growth. Côte d'Ivoire was also a privileged partner by France, as shown by the term “la vitrine de la France en Afrique” (“France’s showcase in Africa”) and illustrated for example by the fact that the country even in 2003 received 22% of France’s total official aid (OECD 2005). Compared to other former French colonies, Côte d'Ivoire has had a great number of French nationals residing in the country, and French capital has dominated the industrial sector.

2.1.1 The “Houphouët-Boigny System”

The Houphouët presidency, lasting from independence in 1960 to Houphouët’s death in December 1993, can be interpreted as a process of consolidation of the power of the PDCI, and perhaps even more, of the president himself. The political system of Côte d'Ivoire was a system of personal rule. The president built up a political leadership consisting largely of people without a political history, who were not well known in their regions. These people thus had no home constituencies, and “owed everything to the one who gave them power” (Bakary 1984:37f). Furthermore, political opposition was often met by offers of political positions to potential rivals.

Two alleged coup attempts, in 1963 and 1964, resulted in the exclusion of more radically oriented leaders within the party, including the presidents of the National Assembly and the Supreme Court (Amundsen 1997:313). When students, joined by other groups, organized demonstrations in 1968 and 1969 in line with student demonstrations in European cities at the time, a combination of repressive means, including massive arrests and the closing of the University, and a Public Dialogue were used to silence the protests (ibid). According to Inge Amundsen, events like these should not be understood as signs of instability, but rather in terms of authoritarian stabilization, because of their effect of consolidating the power of the party and the president (ibid:312). Towards the end of the 1970s extensive corruption in the state administration came to the fore, and Houphouët answered by firing three of his ministers in 1977, including the Minister of Finance, Henri Konan Bédié.

2.1.2 Growing protests and demands for multiparty elections

Although the position of Houphouët-Boigny as a president was never close to being threatened, events in the last years of his presidency showed a weakening of his grip on the Ivorian society. During the 1980s, discontent at the level of student movements and trade unions rose. In September 1989 President Houphouët, as a response to growing hardships and criticism of his government, called for a National Dialogue where representatives from different social groups were invited to bring forward their views on the current situation in the country. Participants raised the issues of economic crisis, reduced purchasing power, and unemployment, as well as governance problems of corruption and fraud, and stressed the impact of the crisis on the lives of Ivorians (N'Da 1999:61). The crisis was attributed partly to external economic factors like deteriorating terms of trade, but also to a slow-working administrative apparatus and to the system of one-party rule.

The National Dialogue was a strategic move from a president who needed to gather support for his government's policies in a pressed situation where he was planning severe budget cuts due to both growing budget deficits and IMF and World Bank pressures (Woods 1998:225). He did not, however, manage to gather all the participants around the government policies as he had hoped for, due to the protests of the university teachers' union *SYNARES*. They linked the country's growing economic problems to the one-party political system, and became the first political organization to advocate openly for the transition to multiparty government, when it called for the application of Article 7 of the Constitution.⁷ The president and the party rejected the claims, and *SYNARES* was put under close scrutiny (N'Da 1999:62).

Shortly after the National Dialogue, Houphouët-Boigny announced several dramatic measures, including a halving of the prices paid to coffee and cocoa producers, public sector reform involving major staff reductions, accelerated privatization of public sector firms, and salary cuts for public and private sector employees. These economic policies represented a major shift in Ivorian post-independence politics. For example,

⁷ This is an article that permits different parties to compete for political power, and which had not been practiced in the country's 29 year-old history as an independent country.

the halving of the coffee and cocoa prices was the first change in these prices in twenty years.

The first months of 1990 were marked by strikes, students' protests and social unrest, directed towards wage cuts, deteriorating conditions on campus, and towards the one-party system. On February 19, students at the University of Abidjan started a student strike demanding the resignation of the Minister of Education, who subsequently had to go (N'Da 1999:64). More and more of the trade unions defied their old affiliations with the PDCI and joined the protests (ibid.) On March 2, the schools and universities were closed, and a "blank year" announced. March and April saw more unions joining the demonstrations, growing critique of corruption and personal enrichment on the part of PDCI leaders, as well as increasing calls for multiparty elections. On May 3, opposition parties and independent organizations were legalized, and the first multiparty election after independence announced to be held in October.

Although the opposition claimed that the elections in October 1990 were marked by irregularities, there is little doubt that president Houphouët was re-elected by the consent of the majority of the people. The "Father of the nation" took home 82 percent of the vote, whereas the major opposition candidate, Laurent Gbagbo of the *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI) got 18 percent. In the following legislative and municipal elections the PDCI also won by large majorities.

The years following the first multiparty elections were characterized by growing student mobilization and violent clashes between students and the police. The organization *FESCI*, formed in June 1991 as a federation of several student organizations, opposed the removal of scholarships, housing, and free transportation for students, and worsening conditions on campus. Demonstrations and gatherings were violently suppressed, as in the event at the Yopougon Student Residence in May 1991, where numerous students were reported to be injured and raped, and others disappeared, after army units invaded the students' dormitories the night after a student meeting.

February 18, 1992, a joint march by the opposition parties and organizations like the Human Rights League LIDHO, SYNARES, and FESCI ended with the arrest of 146 persons, among them FPI leader and member of parliament Laurent Gbagbo (N'Da 1999:87). This massive arrest was made possible by a new severe law passed by the Ouattara government, which made the organizers of the demonstrations liable for anything that happened during the demonstration (Crook 1997:223f).

The FESCI and the SYNARES, created as interest organizations to fight for the living conditions of their respective groups, both became politicized and came to see themselves as a part of the wider democratic movement. Gradually this movement put their support behind the biggest opposition party, the FPI, and its leader, the history teacher Laurent Gbagbo.

2.1.3 The death of Houphouët-Boigny and the succession struggle

The question of who would succeed Houphouët-Boigny as president had been a source of debate and personal struggles within the PDCI almost throughout his presidency. Before his death, however, Houphouët made a constitutional change that made the president of the national assembly the successor to the presidency in case of the president's death. This person would hold the office until the year of the next election⁸. This constitutional change was Houphouët's way of "appointing" Henri Konan Bédié, president of the National Assembly since 1980, as his successor.

When the death of Houphouët-Boigny was announced on December 7, 1993, however, the Prime Minister Alassane Dramane Ouattara tried to announce himself as the new president. Ouattara, an economist and former IMF official and head of the West African Central Bank (BCEAO) had been called to Côte d'Ivoire in the turbulent spring months of 1990 as a government advisor to reform the country's ill-managed economy. He was then appointed to the newly created post of Prime Minister in October 1990, and became the person who took on the offices of the president when the latter came to spend increasingly longer hospital stays in France.

⁸Until then the Constitution had prescribed the organizing of new elections within 60 days

But Bédié won the short succession struggle, and Ouattara soon after took up the post as Deputy Managing Director at the IMF in Washington.

However, Ouattara had strong supporters within the PDCI, and a conflict emerged within the party between the “old guard” of party loyalists, centered on Bédié, and a new group of younger technocrats with liberal economic views, supporting the candidacy of Ouattara. In July 1994 this group broke away from the PDCI and created the *Rassemblement des Républicains* (RDR) to support the candidacy of Ouattara for the presidential elections of October 1995. Ouattara was, however, prevented from posing his candidacy, on the grounds that he was not Ivorian. In mid-1994, the government proposed a new Electoral Law that not only deprived foreigners of the right to vote that they had enjoyed under Houphouët, but also restricted the right to stand as candidate for the Presidency to persons who were Ivorians by birth, with both parents also being Ivoirans by birth. Furthermore, candidates should have resided continuously in the country for the five years prior to the elections, and should neither have renounced their Ivorian citizenship nor taken the nationality of another state (Crook 1997:228). Ouattara was not only said to have a father from Burkina Faso, he had stayed abroad during the last five years, and furthermore, during his time in the IMF and the West African Central Bank had traveled on a Burkinabè diplomatic passport.

The intellectual justification for these changes in legislation lay in the introduction of the concept of “Ivoirité”, developed at the University of Abidjan and introduced by Bédié in response to the political challenge from the RDR. The term was meant to enhance a sense of pride in being Ivorian, and despite Bédié’s assurances that it was not a break with the traditional Ivorian hospitality from the Houphouët days, had the result of arising and intensifying hostility against the country’s many foreigners, and progressively also against “northerners” of Côte d’Ivoire.

The changes in the Electoral Law were considered discriminating by the opposition, who also protested other injustices in the planned election. During the months leading up to the election, the FPI of Laurent Gbagbo and the RDR of Alassane Ouattara

joined forces and formed the *Front Républicain*, which claimed several dramatic reforms in the Electoral Law and the organizing of the elections. Not satisfied with the reforms proposed, they decided to boycott the elections. The boycott was called the Active Boycott and involved mobilizing party militants to try to actively sabotage the elections (Crook 1997:233). Bédié thus won the elections with 96,5 percent, only challenged at the polls by the minor *Parti Ivoirien des Travailleurs* (PIT), the Ivorian Workers' Party.

Bédié and the PDCI seemed to have strengthened their position in the Elections of 1995, and in the following months few observers believed in any power shift in the near future. After the elections, however, the RDR started to use the changes in the Electoral Law in their campaigning, and increasingly tried to mobilize residents of Northern Côte d'Ivoire by claiming that the ruling party deliberately discriminated Northerners and Muslims on ethnic and religious grounds (Crook 1997:234). The rupture of the PDCI has been said to break a historical alliance from the Houphouët days between on the one hand the Baoulé⁹ ethnic group in the south, and on the other hand the people of Northern Côte d'Ivoire and immigrants from Burkina Faso and Mali, often belonging to the same ethnic groups as Ivoiran "northerners"¹⁰, thus depriving Bédié of a big part of his party's traditional constituency.

2.2 Demographic Developments and Ethnic Structure

Côte d'Ivoire's large immigrant population comes from neighboring countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali, and Guinea, and to a lesser extent Senegal, Mauritania, and Ghana. Immigrants were attracted by the relatively prosperous economy and the possibility for work at plantations, and they soon came to provide the bulk of the labor force in the plantation economy. Côte d'Ivoire's choice of opening the country's borders to immigration has resulted in a population which counted over 26% foreigners in 1998, the rate having increased steadily from only 5% in 1950 (Serhan 2002:173). This figure is remarkably high by African and international

⁹ Both Houhouët-Boigny and Bédié belong to the Baoulé group

¹⁰ Senoufo, Malinké, Mande and Voltaic

standards, and the country has been widely admired for managing to receive so many immigrants and at the same time avoiding conflict between different nationalities. Although immigration has continued well into the 1990s, a large number of those who comprise the “foreigners” category today are born in the country, some of them having parents who are also born there. Having the nationality of their origin, has, however, been the natural choice for most in this group, and has caused few problems until the beginning of the 1990s, when the right to vote was restricted to Ivorian nationals, and the introduction of the “carte de séjour”¹¹ brought the distinction between Ivorians and foreigners to the fore of the political scene.

The population of Côte d’Ivoire in 2003 was 17.6 million, of which 45% lived in cities (UNDP 2005). The country is comprised of more than sixty ethnic groups, which can be grouped into five main language groups: Akan, Mande, Krou, Voltaic, and Lagoon. Figures from 1995 estimated that 23 percent of the population belonged to the Baoulé group, 18 percent to Bété, 15 percent to Senoufo, and 33 percent to other groups. The Akan peoples, who include the Baoulé, are largely located in the central region and along the eastern coast, as well as in neighboring Ghana and Togo. The Mande can be divided into northern Mande (including Dioula and Malinké) and the southern Mande. Originally from Liberia, Guinea, and Mali, most of them are located in the centre-west of the country. Krou speakers, including several the Bété group, live mainly in the west. Along the borders of Burkina Faso and Mali in the north is the Voltaic group, to which the Senoufo belongs. Finally, the Lagoon people live close to the coastal lagoon and the coast.

Many of the immigrants who have come to Côte d’Ivoire from neighboring countries share their ethnic affiliation and language with Ivorians; many of the Malian and Burkinabè immigrants, for example, belong to the Mande or Voltaic groups. The three major religious traditions are traditional African religions, Islam and Christianity, of which Islam is estimated to be the religion of 25 percent of the population and Christianity of 17 percent. Traditionally, Islam is a major religion

¹¹ “Residence permit” that distinguishes the immigrants from Ivoirian citizens. It has been used as a negative identification mark provoking stigmatization and

among the Mande and Voltaic groups, whereas Christianity has followers among the Akan and Lagoon peoples.

Politics in Côte d'Ivoire has sometimes been said to be dominated by the largest ethnic group, the Baoulé, to which both Houphouët-Boigny and his successor Henri Konan Bédié belong. However, one of the major achievements of Houphouët after Independence was to include people of different ethnic, geographic, and religious affiliations in his new elite, thus securing his support from different population groups. Especially the immigrant population has traditionally been loyal to the president and his party, the PDCI. With the breakaway of the RDR from the PDCI, and the introduction of the "Ivoirité" discourse during the Bédié presidency, this loyalty has, however, been threatened. The current president, Laurent Gbagbo, is a Bété, and although the FPI, like all parties, recruit followers from all ethnic groups, the Bété has formed an important part of his constituency.

2.3 Economic Structure and Economic Developments

Côte d'Ivoire is the world's leading producer of cocoa and ranks fifth in global coffee production. In 1998 cocoa beans exports accounted for 29% of the country's exports, while processed cocoa represented 7%, coffee beans 8% and petroleum products 10% (INS 1999:8). A majority of Côte d'Ivoire's exports go to Western Europe (51.4% in 1998), with France being the biggest country destination. The second geographical region for Ivorian exports is West Africa (ibid:4). Côte d'Ivoire imports both industrial products and food, and electric machines and constructions represented 16 percent of the country's imports in 1998, while wheat, rice, and meat represented 7 percent. In 1998 Côte d'Ivoire received 56 percent of its imports from Western Europe, with 29 percent coming from France alone. While the balance of trade varied considerably between 1974 and 1998, it remained positive throughout the period. In relation to its major trading partners, however, France and Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire experienced trade deficits in bilateral trade between 1992 and 1998.

While agriculture and cash crop production has been a major priority for the Ivorian government, the country has also tried to build up an industrial base through an import substitution strategy. The major industrial fields are agricultural processing, energy, and construction, textile manufacturing and the apparel industry. From 1965 to 1975, industry's share of exports earnings rose from 20 to 35 percent (Library of Congress 2005). Import substitution policies faced difficulties, however, as the emergence of a domestic market was hindered by low wages in the agricultural sector, which comprised the largest segment of the labor force (ibid).

From 1965 to 1975 Côte d'Ivoire had an annual average growth of 8% of GDP (Husain and Faruquee 1994:81). From the mid-70s, ambitious investment programs following a price boom for cocoa and coffee in 1976 left the country with heavy foreign debts (ibid). These debts became hard to serve as coffee and cocoa prices started falling, while at the same time Côte d'Ivoire as an oil importing country suffered from rising oil prices related to the first and second oil shocks. The country's terms of trade thus declined by roughly 40 percent from 1978-1982 (Zartman and Delgado 1984:15). Commercial interest rates rose in the same period. The country then entered a severe economic crisis, and in 1981 it turned to the IMF and the World Bank for assistance, starting the period of economic adjustment.

2.4 The rise of Nationalism and Ethnic Politics

There is wide agreement that the political crisis in Côte d'Ivoire is intimately linked to the country's history of immigration and to the ways in which the country's demographic composition has been managed by the political elite. While immigration from other African countries was encouraged in the 1960s and 1970s, it seems like the large group of first, second and third generation immigrants in the country today are used as scapegoats for the economic and political problems. Many analysts claim that these groups have never been fully integrated into Ivorian society, and that the tensions we see today are the consequence of the lack of integration.

2.4.1 Multiparty elections and the question of citizenship

In 1966, the Parliament stopped a proposition from President Houphouët-Boigny to grant double citizenship to foreigners living in Côte d'Ivoire. However, foreigners did have the right to vote in elections. During the period of single-party rule, where there were no real opponents to Houphouët in presidential elections, the foreigners' vote was accepted and seen as "a civic thank-offering by the immigrants to Houphouët-Boigny for his hospitality" (Crook 1997:222). With the introduction of multiparty elections, however, the issues of citizenship and the right to vote gained new importance, and the foreigners' voting right became controversial.

Through his "policy of hospitality", Houphouët-Boigny had not only provided the country with plentiful labor in the agricultural and industrial sectors, securing the basis for rapid economic growth (cf. Chapter 2), he had also secured himself a constituency of people who felt personally indebted to him. The relations between immigrant groups and the political elite also included close links between organizations representing various migrant groups, e.g. Burkinabè and Malian, on the one hand and local and national authorities on the other (Chauveau 2000:10).

When prior to the multiparty elections in October 1990 it was announced that African foreigners would be allowed to vote, the opposition therefore interpreted this as deliberate election rigging to secure the victory of the PDCI, especially since neither non-African foreigners nor Ivorians abroad were allowed to vote. The opposition, led by the FPI, chose to challenge the ruling party by countering its alliance with the foreigners. This was done through attacking non-democratic and corrupt practices by the PDCI, but increasingly also by portraying "the foreigners" as a group that was being unjustly favored by the political elite to the detriment of "real" Ivorians. The FPI thus started to encourage an Ivorian xenophobic nationalism.

In the following years the question of citizenship became an increasingly important issue in Ivorian politics. Political debate came to center around the criteria for being defined as an Ivorian and thus being granted citizenship, a National Identity Card,

and the right to vote; and around the question of eligibility for the presidency. The new focus on citizenship and a hardened tone towards foreigners was accompanied by a new nationalist rhetoric encouraged by Henri Konan Bédié's term Ivoirité.

2.4.2 The Ivoirité discourse

In December 1993 Houphouët-Boigny died. His appointed successor, Henri Konan Bédié, soon faced the splitting of his party, when some deputies and technocrats within the PDCI who had wanted Alassane Ouattara for president broke away and formed the RDR in early 1994. Within the following months political debate in Côte d'Ivoire became dominated by an increasingly tense power struggle between the leaders of the three major parties, Bédié, Gbagbo, and Ouattara, and by rhetoric of ethnicity and xenophobia.

Bédié launched the term Ivoirité as an attempt to mobilize a sense of national pride and unity. It was also an attempt to save the position of the PDCI in face of the challenge from the RDR. The Ivoirité discourse has been regarded by observers as the root cause of the problems today ravaging Côte d'Ivoire. The initiation of this discourse by the political elite clearly led to a gradual aggravation of xenophobia and an "ethnicization" of the political debate, where foreigners were increasingly being used as scapegoats for the country's economic and political problems. The ethno-sociologist Georges Niangoran Bouah defines the socio-cultural foundations of Ivoirité as follows:

"Ivoirité is the set of socio-historical, geographic, and linguistic data which enables us to say that an individual is a citizen of Côte d'Ivoire or an Ivorian. The person who asserts his 'Ivoirité' is supposed to have Côte d'Ivoire as his country, be born of Ivorian parents belonging to one of the ethnic groups native to Côte d'Ivoire."

(Georges Niangoran Bouah 1996, quoted in Akindès 2004:27)

The ideological justification of Ivoirité was developed by scholars of the University of Codody, Abidjan, under the unit CURDIPHE (*University Cell for the Research and Diffusion of the Political Ideas and Actions of Henri Konan Bédié*). The group

was formed at the PDCI annual congress in august 1995, where Bédié for the first time presented the idea of Ivoirité officially. A year later CURDIPHE published its manifesto *“Ivoirité, or the Spirit of President Henri Konan Bédié’s New Social Contract”*. In this document, the high proportion of immigrants in the country was raised as a major cause of concern, particularly because of the “dominant” or “hegemonic” place they were said to have in the economy. The manifesto also stressed the need to define clearly who was an Ivorian and who was not:

“In order to construct a “We”, you have to distinguish a “They”. We need to manage to establish the discrimination WE/THEY in a way that is compatible with pluralism of nationalities”

(CURDIPHE 2000:66)

In 1998, the Economic and Social Council published a report entitled *“Immigration in Côte d’Ivoire: the Limit of Tolerance is passed”* (*Immigration en Côte d’Ivoire: le seuil du tolérable est largement dépassé*). The report warned against the negative consequences of the large-scale immigration into Côte d’Ivoire, and painted a picture where foreigners were said to be dominating the economy and to a large extent made responsible for the growth in poverty among Ivorians. The report also said that the large influx of Muslim immigrants had “considerably modified the pre-existing religious balance”, and warned that this “could lead some people to endeavor to exploit religious affiliation for political ends, which is a disservice to national harmony and unity, and a threat to the social peace so dear to our country” (Report of the Economic and Social Council, October 1998, cited in Akindès 2004:29).

According to Akindès, Ivoirité existed in two versions: a “tribal” version during the Bédié presidency and a more “civic” version after the transition under General Gueï. The tribal version of Ivoirité tended to safeguard the position of the Akan ethnic group, which was seen to have a “predisposition to govern others”, but under democratization was losing the dominant political position that they had been preserving for four decades. In his book *“Les chemins de ma vie”*, Bédié describes

the history of the Akan people. According to him, Akan tradition and thought systems were rich enough to serve as a motor for rapid modernization of Côte d'Ivoire. According to Akindès, Bédié followed the tradition from Houphouët's time in trying to preserve Akan hegemony. The break with Houphouëtism, however, consisted of making this strategy explicit, thus introducing an identity dimension into political debate.

In the second version, Ivoirité was less Akan and more inclusive to people of the south, center, and west, but still exclusive towards people of the north. Because people of the north, like Senoufo and Malinké, often share family names with the citizens of neighboring countries, and also share their Muslim religion, they tend to be regarded by southerners as less than full members of the Ivorian nation (Akindès 2004:29).

2.4.3 The electoral code and restrictions on eligibility

The "intellectual" work on Ivoirité and the increasingly nationalist language used by the president and the political elite worked as the justification for radical changes in policy. In December 1994, the national assembly passed a new electoral code. It restricted the right to vote to Ivorian citizens, and stated that candidates for the presidency must be Ivorians by birth, with both parents also being Ivorians by birth. In addition, candidates should not have been living outside the country for the last five years, and should never have renounced their Ivorian citizenship or taken the nationality of another state (Crook 1997: 228).

The restrictions on eligibility were quite clearly designed to prevent Alassane Ouattara from presenting himself as a presidential candidate. Ouattara's nationality was disputed; his opponents claimed his father was Burkinabè, while Ouattara himself has always maintained he is 100 percent Ivorian. At the time, Ouattara was also living in the United States, and he was criticized for having traveled on a Burkinabè passport in the past (actually a Burkinabè diplomatic passport).

The PDCI, in proposing these changes in legislation, was using to its advantage the FPI's protests against the elections four years before. The FPI, who had been campaigning to remove the foreigners' right to vote in 1990, could hardly protest when the PDCI now wanted to do precisely this (Crook 1997:228). During the run-up to the 1990 elections the FPI had also built up an anti-foreign sentiment that Bédié now exploited and further exacerbated.

Before the 1995 elections, the FPI found themselves weakened and politically marginalized. They had lost their seats in parliament, leaving the RDR as the official opposition (ibid.:229). They probably saw their chances of electoral success as marginal, and at the same time they were critical of the way the government prepared the elections. The FPI decided to join forces with the RDR to form the *Front Républicain*, to protest the Electoral Code and the exclusion of Ouattara, and to boycott the elections through what they called the Active Boycott, which included actively sabotaging the elections. The two major opposition parties thus managed to discredit the elections in face of public opinion and internationally, and they left president Bédié considerably politically weakened.

2.4.4 RDR: Manipulating ethnicity and religion in the north

Although nationalist and xenophobic sentiments were clearly provoked and manipulated by Bédié and the PDCI and by Bédié and Gbagbo, the RDR, on the other side, may also be seen to have created and strengthened ethnic and religious cleavages through their way of handling the conflict. In their view, Alassane Ouattara was excluded from politics because he was a northerner and a Muslim. Their strategy was to mobilize the support of Ivorians of the north and Muslims in particular through telling them that they were excluded by the political elite on grounds of their ethnic affiliation and their religion.

2.4.5 Ethnic cleavages and baoulé dominance

The most obvious aspect of ethnic conflict is the north-south tensions and the dominance of the south over the north, which are often portrayed as major causes of the rebellion. Another dimension of ethnic conflict, however, is the history of ethnic

tensions in the forest zone of western Côte d'Ivoire, which can help explain the emergence of the xenophobic appearance of the FPI of today.

The forest zone was the receiver of large movements of immigration, mostly Baoulé people from the Center-East and Sénoufo and Malinké people from northern Côte d'Ivoire as well as immigrants from Burkina Faso and Mali. The Houphouët-Boigny government strongly supported the settlers and their right to acquire land, as part of their strategy for promoting agricultural development for export production. But this policy has also been regarded as a way of favoring the Baoulé ethnic group and the groups of the north as well as foreigners. These groups have been the most loyal to the PDCI, and many analysts see the long-time stability of the Houphouët-Boigny presidency as the result of an historical alliance between the dominating Baoulé ethnic group, the groups of the north and immigrants. The “losers” in this system were the non-Akan¹² groups of the southern Côte d'Ivoire, and particularly the original population of the forest zone.

The massive acquisition of land by Ivorian and foreign colonists held potential conflicts between locals and “newcomers”, which came to the fore as land started to become scarce. Although in most communities locals and immigrants lived peacefully together, over time there was built up a frustration among the locals over the PDCI government and its perceived ethnic bias in favor of the Baoulé, the northerners and the foreigners.

It was this frustration that Laurent Gbagbo was able to build upon when the alliance between the Baoulé and the North broke after Houphouët's death. An important part of Gbagbo's constituency is made up of his own ethnic group, the Bété, originating from the western region of Gagnoa, which has received great numbers of immigrants in the past.

¹² Baoulé is a sub-group of Akan

In the political sphere, critics have also denounced what they see as “Baoulé dominance”. Under Houphouët-Boigny this dominance was moderate, and the president was careful at least to give the impression of an inclusive system. Under Bédié, however, the Baoulé dominance became more visible. In 1999, he replaced a number of civil servants of northern origin with persons from the Baoulé group, as a promised reward to party activists for mobilizing informal support groups called the *Cercle National Bédié* (Toungara 2001:67).

3. Theoretical Framework

Our assumption is that the political breakdown in Côte d'Ivoire is a result of a gradual decline in government trust and legitimacy and a parallel growth in protest. Why has legitimacy declined and protest grown? Political science theory offers various explanations of why social conflicts emerge, governments lose societal trust and countries are thrown into war. The first group of theories that will be presented is theories on ethnicity. The traditional cleavage in debates on ethnicity is between those who see ethnicity as a fundamental psychological attachment and ethnic conflict as a result of ancient hatreds between groups (primordialists), and those who regard it as a powerful political instrument in the hands of political elites (instrumentalists). Both of these are challenged, however, by others who regard ethnic identity as but one of several identities, and highlight the need to analyze the interplay between ethnicity, economics, and politics, and the reasons why ethnicity becomes relevant in specific historical situations. Theories of the neo-patrimonial state may help us understand the emergence of “ethnic conflict” in light of economic and political developments.

The second group of theories consists of economic explanations. Classical theories in political science show how economic structure determines political change, but these theories have also been met with critique for ignoring the role of culture in politics. We present the theory of relative deprivation, which offers a model for analyzing under what circumstances and how economics influences politics. Recent arguments about “greed and grievance” –the claim that war is as much a result of elites’ aspirations to profit as of social grievance – will also be touched upon.

In the last section of the chapter, the concept of political accountability is discussed. While state legitimacy is widely assumed to be strengthened by the transition to multiparty democracy, it may paradoxically be threatened by related public sector reforms when these are promoted by foreign actors. The active role of international

actors may shift the accountability of government and administration officers away from their national constituencies and towards international actors, thereby undermining governmental trust and impeding the development of a culture of democracy and participation.

3.1 Theories on Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict

Conflicts in Africa are rarely discussed without a reference to ethnicity. However, there is no agreement as to the exact role that ethnicity plays in the development of conflict. In the following we will give an overview of different theoretical perspectives on ethnicity and ethnopolitics and their role in African intrastate conflicts.

3.1.1 Primordialism and instrumentalism

Arguments on how ethnicity emerges and becomes politicized can be placed along a continuum between a *primordialist* and an *instrumentalist* perspective. This dichotomy goes back to the 1950s and '60s. While primordialism grew out of studies of the “new states” in Africa and Asia and was part of the modernization school, instrumentalism can be traced back to the Manchester school of anthropology that studied ethnicity of urban African communities in the 1950s (Andreassen 2003:81f).

According to a primordialist view, social organization and politics are deeply influenced by *primordial* attachments such as blood, language, religion, and tradition. These attachments are so fundamental that political institutions that ignore them will meet difficulties. This was the case, for instance, with the newly independent states after decolonization (ibid:80). Eller and Coughland (1993) name three assumptions of a primordialist perspective:

- Primordial identities are given, they are a priori. They are natural and ‘spiritual’ rather than sociological, they have long histories, and all interaction is carried out within primordial ties.

- Primordial sentiments are ineffable. Members of ethnic groups feel group attachment as natural and necessary, and they are compelled and overpowered to feel this attachment.
- Primordialism is fundamentally a question of emotion and affect.

(Eller and Coughland 1993, quoted in Andreassen 2003)

Opposed to primordialism is instrumentalism, where ethnicity is seen as an instrument used for political or material purposes. In this perspective, people mobilize to compete for resources or in other ways fight for their interests, and ethnicity might be used as a tool for mobilization. Political elites, for example, may find it useful to encourage or even to create ethnic affiliations in order to gather political support. In other words, ethnic identity is a dynamic phenomenon, which can change according to political change. Far from primordialist perceptions of ethnicity as given or ineffable, instrumentalists see ethnicity as a political phenomenon responding to a large extent to changes in social and political circumstances.

Primordialists and instrumentalists share, however, the understanding of ethnicity as a major independent force in politics. The difference lies in how they view the origins of ethnicity and the ways in which they assume ethnicity to influence politics.

3.1.2 Ethnopolitics

In his book “Ethnopolitics” from 1981, Joseph Rothschild analyzes the role of ethnicity in politics. He sees ethnicity as a modern political phenomenon. In line with an instrumentalist perspective, he sees ethnicity is a “plastic, variegated, and originally ascriptive trait that, in certain historical and socio-economic circumstances, is readily politicized.” (Rothschild 1981:1). In modern and modernizing societies he finds that such fertile circumstances for the politicization of ethnicity abound. This is because these societies have structured interethnic inequalities as well as entrepreneurs who have an interest in mobilizing ethnicity into political leverage to alter or reinforce these structured inequalities. As a consequence of this, “in modern and transitional societies – unlike traditional ones – politicized ethnicity has become

the crucial principle of political legitimation and delegitimation of systems, states, regimes, and governments” (ibid:2, emphasis added).

Rothschild proposes a model where ethnic conflict is determined by a) inequities in the distribution of resources to different ethnic groups and b) the ethnic groups’ uneven access to the state (ibid.) This model assumes a conscious choice of identities among the people as well as agency among political leaders (traditional and modern). Leading from this, he offers a definition of the politicization of ethnicity: To politicize ethnicity is to “render people cognitively aware of the relevance of politics to the health of their ethnic cultural values, and vice versa;.. to stimulate their concern about this nexus.. to mobilise them into self-conscious ethnic groups.. and.. to direct their behaviour toward activity in the political arena on the basis of this awareness, concern, and group consciousness” (ibid.)

3.1.3 A critique of ethnic conflict

In her introductory chapter to the book “The Myth of Ethnic Conflict”, Beverly Crawford offers an explanation to the rise of conflicts between ethnic groups that runs contrary to both primordialist and instrumental interpretations of ethnicity. Her argument is that ethnic conflict must be interpreted in light of its economic, political, and institutional context. In her view, dominant explanations of ethnic conflict do not adequately account for why ethnic conflict arises in some situations and not in others. The following account is based on Crawford (1998).

An institutional approach to ethnic conflict

Crawford suggests that the key to explaining cultural conflict and cooperation lies in political institutions, which can create incentives for cooperation and competition. Prevalence of cultural conflict is higher where culture has been historically politicized. Institutions in modern states often, however, play a crucial role in cementing, creating, or attenuating cultural or identity politics that have been created in historical power struggles. Crawford claims that *institutional change* is often the trigger of violent ethnic conflict. Her argument has three steps: a)the politicization of cultural identity, b)institutional change, political entrepreneurs, and bandwagoning

and c) globalization and political liberalization as triggers of institutional change and the breakdown of social contracts. I will discuss each in turn.

Politicization of cultural identity: Social interests and divisions can be defined in many different ways, of which ethnic divisions is one. But although different divisions exist, not all of them become politically relevant. If ethnic divisions are to provoke conflict, they first have to be politicized; cultural identities must be transformed into political identities. Political institutions can either legitimate or attenuate politicized cultural identities. In Latin America, it was class rather than ethnicity that became a politically relevant division, whereas in Africa ethnicity has more typically become politicized. How and why do cultural or ethnic divisions become politically relevant? One example can be found in colonial policies where colonial powers used divide-and-rule tactics along ethnic lines. These policies created the opportunity for political entrepreneurs among colonized groups to draw on cultural identities to mobilize resistance to imperial control, gain access to political power and territory, and exercise power in the construction of new national institutions when colonial power collapsed. In apartheid South Africa and in the period of slavery and Jim Crow laws in the United States race was politicized by internal political elites in ways that led to similar historical struggles (Crawford 1998: 18).

Such historical struggles that transformed cultural identity into political identity always required political entrepreneurs, individual leaders, and elites to interpret discrimination or privilege in ways that made cultural identity politically relevant to their targeted constituencies. It was, however, the *institutions of the central state* that determined whether or not politicized cultural identity would be cemented in social and political practice and whether culturally defined groups would seek autonomy, separatism, or the right to participate with others in the political arena (ibid.:20). In the Soviet Union, institutions created new cultural divisions that did not previously exist. In Yugoslavia, institutions reinforced cultural divisions that had historically been created by political entrepreneurs. It was always the institutions of the central

state that set the terms of the social contract. The state can either strengthen or weaken the politicization of ethnicity, depending on the importance it gives to ethnic divisions as compared to other divisions. States that privilege one or several ethnic groups over others in terms of political participation or resource distribution, for example, legitimate politicized cultural divisions and may intensify or even create political groups based on identity. Conversely, states that base their rules of participation and resource allocation on other criteria than cultural divisions weaken the political relevance of cultural differences. Universal suffrage and citizenship rights base political identity on individual criteria rather than cultural identity, and may attenuate the political relevance of ethnicity. Such rules, however, need supportive institutions like a representative political system, a functioning judicial system and a police force as well as allocative institutions to protect cultural groups from discrimination.

Whether or not political conflict will escalate into violent conflict is highly dependent on institutional legitimacy and strength. When state institutions are strong, resource allocation considered fair, and political competition and representation secured, ethnic violence is not likely despite “ethnic” policies of privilege and compensation.

When institutions are considered illegitimate, on the other hand, for example if one or several groups are excluded from political participation or from privileged resource allocation, social grievance and political resentment and distrust will prevail. However, if state institutions remain strong, they may be able to oppress resistance so that violent conflict does not erupt. Violent conflict is likely to break out when state institutions are weakened in societies that have a high level of social resentment, which in turn is the outcome of previous institutional encouragement of identity politics (ibid.:24).

Institutional change, political entrepreneurs, and bandwagoning: In societies where ethnicity is politicized, political legitimacy low, and institutions put under pressure or weakened, political entrepreneurs may emerge who have both the incentive and the

opportunity to exploit cultural cleavages and perceived inequalities in an effort to mobilize popular support. This may succeed if political institutions encourage identity politics and if prohibitions against the practice of extreme identity politics are weak. As entrepreneurs start to practice identity politics, the cost for others to join decrease, and as support for these policies becomes widespread, the costs of not joining may increase. Likewise, identity policies spread from one ethnic group to others when leaders and members of groups see another group mobilizing behind ethnic slogans. Ethnicity policies are thus created as a defensive strategy, and further accentuate tensions. These processes, which can be termed “bandwagon effects”, may escalate ethnic tensions and provoke violence.

In situations of resource scarcity and institutional weakness, leaders may be tempted to privilege particular ethnic groups, because patronage networks of resource distribution have few transaction costs. This is what happened in Yugoslavia, where a weakening of the central government caused regional party elites to take over more and more of the allocative authority. The deepening economic crisis and the collapse of the social welfare system made their role and their patronage networks increasingly important and increased the political significance of cultural bonds (ibid.:25).

Globalization, liberalization, institutional change, and social contracts: In societies where ethnicity has been politicized and deep divisions exist, conflict may still be attenuated by a social contract which, although privileging certain groups over others and considered unfair, still may provide all groups with sufficient resources to prevent the resort to violence. However, in a situation where state institutions that have traditionally maintained a social contract attenuating ethnic conflict are weakened and are no longer able to uphold the social contract, this opens political space for “ethnic entrepreneurs” to mobilize support. Likewise, when state institutions that have repressed dissent by force, are weakened and no longer have the means to maintain the repression, they leave the way for violent actions by minorities.

According to Crawford, the most important factors leading to the weakening of state institutions and the breakup of social contracts are the global trends of globalization and the national responses of economic liberalization that deprive state institutions of resources. Although a weakening of the state may have many different reasons, like corruption, bureaucratic rigidity, or constitutional changes, a weakening due to a diminution of state resources is especially harmful, because it deprives the state of its distributive capacities. When the resources of institutions that have previously provided accepted distributive channels are diminished, and the institutions withdraw from their distributive role, those who are disadvantaged by that withdrawal blame the state for their hardships, and the state loses legitimacy (ibid.:33).

3.1.4 Ethnicity in context: The rise and decline of the neo-patrimonial state

Like Crawford and Lipschutz, Braathen, Bøås and Sæther question the use of ethnicity as an independent driving force in politics, and highlight the need to analyze the economic and political history of ethnic identities. They criticize the tendency to view ethnicity either as a “leftover from a bygone age and a barrier to modernization” (cfr. primordialism) or as “merely a destructive political weapon in the hands of political leaders” (cfr. instrumentalism) (Braathen et.al. 2000:4f), and emphasize the need to examine why ethnicity becomes politically relevant. According to these authors, the prominence of ethnicity in contemporary conflicts in Africa can be explained by the rise and decline of the neo-patrimonial state.

The concept of the neo-patrimonial state has been used by Jean-Francois Médard and others to describe the functioning of the state in Africa. It builds upon Weber’s identification of patrimonial authority as a sub-group of traditional authority.¹³ Following Weber, the main characteristic of patrimonialism is the confusion between the private and the public sector (Médard 1996: 86). Power is personalized and access

¹³ According to Weber, the authority of political rulers may be based upon traditional, charismatic, or legal-rational authority. Within the definition of traditional authority Weber identifies three sub-groups; namely patriarchal, patrimonial, and feudal, where patriarchal is limited to the family, patrimonial is the logic of patriarchy extended to a larger social unit and dependent on middlemen, and feudalism is the most decentralized where the loyalty between lord and vassal is institutionalized into informal “contracts” (Weber 1997; Médard 1996)

to political power can be transformed into economic power through clientelistic and patronage practices of social distribution, where economic favors are given from the ruler in exchange for loyalty or support from the ruled. Médard has found that postcolonial African states developed a system where these characteristics were predominant on a national level, although in these states the patrimonial logics were modified and restrained by formal political institutions. *Neo-patrimonialism* thus refers to a system where patrimonial rule coexists with a formal bureaucratic system of legal rational authority. According to Ankie Hoogvelt, neo-patrimonialism developed as a response to a situation where states were weak, lacking legitimacy, and confronted with coalitions of rent-seeking strongmen using alternative power bases. (Hoogvelt 2001:188).

Although neo-patrimonial practices naturally are not confined to Africa, but on the contrary to be found in all political systems, Bratton and van de Walle argue that neo-patrimonialism is the *core* feature of politics in Africa and in a small number of other states, because personal relationships constitute the foundation and superstructure of political institutions in these states (Bratton and van de Walle 1997: 62).

The relationship between a neo-patrimonial pattern of resource distribution and political legitimacy and stability is an ambiguous one: On the one hand, neo-patrimonial networks can be integrative and produce political stability. In a patron-client relationship, the clients provide the patron with political support, and to the extent that the patron-client networks include a majority of the population, it is an efficient, though not egalitarian or democratic, way of securing political legitimacy and thereby stability (Bøås and Dokken 2002:164). On the other hand, a neo-patrimonial distribution pattern draws heavily on state resources, creating a pressure on the state that can eventually threaten the legitimacy and stability of the system (Andreassen 2003). Médard puts it this way: “When patrimonialism is exacerbated it becomes self destructive”. Eventually, there will be little left to exploit (Médard 1996: 95).

Some authors have suggested that the neo-patrimonial African state was undermined by the economic recession in the 1980s and 1990s. When state revenues declined as a result of commodity price falls and decreased aid, African leaders were no longer able to uphold these expensive practices of clientelism, and the neo-patrimonial form of legitimacy built up over decades disappeared, without being replaced by other adequate forms of legitimacy (Bøås and Dokken 2002; Hoogvelt 2001).

When this happens, and the state no longer has the means to uphold its authority, the space is opened up for individual officials and other “strongmen” who pursue their own interests. Gradually the state becomes “criminalized” (Braathen et.al 2000:15). If these conflicts get militarized, and war breaks out, ethnic identity is often mobilized by the different contenders (ibid.) Ethnic hostilities can thus be a consequence, rather than a cause, of civil war.

3.2 Economic Explanations of Protest and Conflict

3.2.1 Does economics determine politics, or the other way around?

The relationship between economic structure and political system is an old theme in political science. To Marx it was changes in the structure of production that produced political change. Weber, on the other hand, favored the primacy of culture: the rise of capitalism, the Industrial Revolution, and the Democratic Revolution was to a large extent a result of the emergence of the Protestant Ethic (Inglehart 1997:9)

In the 1950s and 1960s, theorists of the Modernization School assumed that the social and cultural changes following modernization would in turn lead to democratization in developing countries, like they were said to have done in the West. They assumed that “all good things go together”, meaning that societies who experienced economic and social development would also experience democratization, but the economic changes were assumed to come first.

Although more conscious of political processes, social scientists like Seymour Martin Lipset, Barrington Moore, and Robert A. Dahl agreed with Rostow that political

developments depended upon economic structure and changes. Lipset established that industrialization, urbanization, and rising levels of wealth and education created good conditions for stable elected government (Lipset 1981). To Barrington Moore, the growth of a commercial bourgeoisie would lead to democracy, as the new middle class would demand political reform to secure their personal freedoms and property rights vis-à-vis the old landed aristocracy (Moore 1996). Robert A. Dahl (1971) argued that countries with a high level of socio-economic development would be more likely to be democracies because they generally had higher level of education and communication, a more pluralistic social order, and prevented extreme inequalities.

Analyses that, contrary to economic explanations, favor the primacy of culture, often take as their starting point Almond and Verba's "The Civic Culture" (1965). This study is concerned with the cultural conditions for democracy and mass participation. The authors argue that democratization requires the establishment of a political culture based on persuasion, consensus and diversity; what they call "the civic culture" (Almond and Verba 1965:6).

Samuel Huntington (1968) shared the modernization theorists' view that *modernity* was likely to lead to democratization, but argued that the process of *modernization*, on the contrary, more likely would produce instability. While modernization brings people both increased economic opportunities and increased expectations, the expectations are likely to grow faster than economic opportunities, thus creating a gap between people's aspirations and their possibility to fulfill them. This gap produces a social frustration that can be destabilizing if the mobility opportunities are low and political institutions weak and not capable of containing the rising demands on them by increasingly conscious and socially frustrated citizens.

3.2.2 Determinants of conflict: What role for economics?

It is a reasonable assumption that violent rebellion is more likely in times of economic hardships than in affluent times. Empirical research supports this

assumption at a general level. Boswell and Dixon (1990:554) and Muller and Weede (1990:648) found that high rates of economic growth reduce the incidence of violent rebellion and political violence (Auvinen 1997:178). Other studies have showed that level of economic development in a society correlates negatively with political violence (Hardy (1979), Weede (1981), Zimmermann (1980:177), all referred in Auvinen1997:179). However, the relationship between economic level and political conflict is not a simple one; for example those least likely of political protest and violence may often be the very poorest, who have to spend all their resources on daily survival. One tool for analyzing the relation between economy and conflict is provided by Ted Robert Gurr's concept of relative deprivation.

Gurr used the term "relative deprivation" to explain people's incentives to use violent rebellion (Gurr 1970). He defined relative deprivation as "actors' perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities" (ibid:24), where value expectations of a collectivity were "the average value positions to which its members believe they are justifiably entitled", and value capabilities were "the average value positions [a collectivity's] members perceive themselves capable of attaining or maintaining". The sources of an individual's value standards can be a reference group, the individual's past condition, an abstract ideal, or the standards articulated by a leader (ibid:25). Political violence is thus seen as a result of people's frustration over their living conditions. It is not the level of material welfare in itself that determines conflict, but rather the extent to which the level of welfare is perceived as unjust.

Gurr identifies three patterns of relative deprivation. *Decremental deprivation* is where deprivation is experienced in relations to past conditions; that is, when conditions have worsened. *Aspirational deprivation* refers to a situation where value expectations rise whereas value capabilities remain constant. This can happen when traditional societies are exposed to, or come to know of, better material ways of life. It can also happen when industrialization and growth in a society gives some people better living conditions, whereas the majority don't experience this change. Finally,

progressive deprivation refers to the mechanism showed by Davies' J-curve¹⁴; that is where a long-term economic and social improvement generates expectations of continued improvement, but is interrupted by stagnation or decline.

3.2.3 Greed or grievance?

Deprivation theories have been attacked in recent years for over-focusing the “pull factor” of economic deprivation and underscoring the “push factor” that rebellion and war may be a lucrative business for some. Collier and others have argued that the prospect of income from control over natural resources is an essential motivation for rebel leaders. In a quantitative study of 161 countries, Collier (2000) found that his indicators of greed corresponded with violent conflict, whereas his indicators of grievance did not.¹⁵

While Collier's perspective may be useful in turning our attention to the economic motivations of elites in war, it has also been met with criticism. Luckham et.al. (2001) point out that greed may have become more important with the weakening of the state in the last decade, but that it is more useful as an explanatory factor for some conflicts (Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the two Congos) than for others. They further criticize the distinction between greed and grievance motives as simplistic. Is not youth impoverishment, for example, which lead young men to join rebel groups (or militias), a sign of grievance as much as of greed?

3.3 Political Accountability

For a political system and its government to be legitimate, the government has to prove its legitimacy through following certain principles or leading policies that are acceptable to those who are the source of their legitimacy. In a democratic system, the source of legitimacy is the electorate, and the government thus is accountable to,

¹⁴ Davies was concerned about the prospects for revolutions, and held that these were most likely to occur “where a prolonged period of economic and social development is followed by a short period of sharp reversal” (Davies quoted in Gurr 1970:52)

¹⁵ As indicators of greed he used primary commodities as a percentage of GDP, the percentage of young men aged 15-24 years in a population, and education level. As indicators of grievance he used the degree of ethnic or religious fractionalization in a society, inequality in land ownership, degree of political rights, and per capita growth rate in the economy in the previous five years. (See Collier (2000) and Collier and Hoeffler (2000)).

that is answers for its policies and actions to, the electorate. If leaders can not adequately answer to the electorate for their policies, legitimacy is weakened and protest and violence may occur. Political stability thus requires a well-functioning system of internal accountability.

Economic and political changes in African states in the last decades may be expected to have contradictory effects on accountability between the rulers and the ruled. On the one hand, the legalization of political parties and interest-organizations and the introduction of multiparty systems would be expected to create openness and a possibility for the public to rid themselves of political leaders who don't live up to expectations, which would clearly enhance accountability and hence also democracy. On the other hand, some of the economic changes that have occurred due to globalization and economic liberalization may have narrowed the policy space for rulers and thus limiting their ability to respond to public demands. Furthermore, a general perception that "leaders are not in full control of policymaking" due to close and constant dialogue with external actors may weaken their legitimacy (Bratton and van de Walle 1997:133).

Christopher Clapham has described the process of donor and creditor conditionalities in the 1990s as a process of "externalization of political accountability", as these claims led African government's attention towards the donor community more than to their internal constituencies. Although Clapham uses "externalization of political accountability" specifically to describe *political* conditionalities of the 1990s, as opposed to the macroeconomic conditionalities of the 1980s, it is possible to extend the concept to covering the economic conditionalities. Intended or not, in the process of policy reform governments became more accountable to external than internal actors, although the internal political opposition naturally used external actors as allies and also influenced them (Clapham 1996).

3.3.1 “Choiceless Democracies” as a result of economic reform

Turning to the effects of *economic* changes on accountability, Thandika Mkandawire has described how the requirements of institutions has had the effect of producing “Choiceless Democracies” that faces a challenge of internal legitimacy as they strive to adhere to the demands of the international institutions. He argues that Structural Adjustment can influence the competence and reach of democratically elected governments on at least three levels: the level of objectives, the level of instruments, and the level of structural constraints (Mkandawire 1999:123).

At the level of *objectives*, the choice of African governments clearly was limited by the fiscal and foreign exchange crisis that was the background for the involvement of the Bretton Woods institutions. However, in Mkandawire’s view, their choice was further constrained by the particular solutions imposed by the institutions (ibid). The adjustment programs set forth macro-economic stabilization as the overriding objective, whereas other goals, such as national capacities to initiate and sustain change, resource mobilization, structural reforms and the social sustainability of the policies, were neglected.

Further, the narrowing of the choice of political objectives has worsened the already very serious challenges to elected governments of creating political legitimacy. In the authoritarian states of post-independence Africa, the quest for legitimacy was central, and power was legitimized by the ability of the political authorities to promote public welfare. Democratization has opened space for economic interests to organize themselves and has led to pressures on government from various contending groups, exemplified by massive strike waves in some countries. However, in this same period, the main priorities of governments have not been to address these social and political demands, but rather to adhere to orthodox adjustment programs (ibid:124). As these programs are often very unpopular, they run the risk of delegitimizing democratic rule if tangible results are not perceived.

Finally, the tendency of adjustment programs to come as “packaged and sealed” (ibid:124), limits the domain of competence of democratic governance by foreclosing debates on issues such as income distribution, taxation, and protection or non-protection of certain economic activities. On a more general level, the intellectual and ideological dominance of the view that there is no alternative to liberalism and economic orthodoxy undermines the task of building a democratic political culture, and encourages politics of no compromise.

At the level of *instruments*, Mkandawire argues that constraints on policy instruments imposed by adjustment can lead to a blunting or even a loss of instruments necessary for democratically elected governments to manage their economies and other national issues. First, relations between African governments and the financial institutions are heavily influenced by the legacy of authoritarian rule. Under authoritarian rule, power was concentrated in the president’s office and in the bureaucracy, with little real power left to the ministers. Further, bureaucrats were not used to their work being subject to parliamentary or public scrutiny. This created a cult of secrecy that did not disappear with democratization. This cult of secrecy is also very much prevalent in relations with aid donors and the Bretton Woods Institutions. Actually, Mkandawire holds that there is a whole tradition of interaction between foreign donors and African governments that has been premised on this institutional premise. Post-authoritarian governments are faced with powerful technocracies in their own bureaucracies who have strong international networks. With the increasing presence of the Bretton Woods institutions the position of these technocracies is further strengthened, while at the same time the officials of the World Bank themselves exercise substantial power to scrutinize and criticize public policies. The same possibility does not apply to the parliament. In this way, democratic control of state policy is undermined.

Secondly, the World Bank since 1989 has been stressing the importance of good governance for the successful implementation of reforms. However, their perception of governance from the outset was essentially technocratic, with the inclusion of democracy into the understanding of governance came much later (ibid:126).

Mkandawire argues that “it is part of conventional economic wisdom that the general public, included elected political leaders, cannot understand the counter-intuitive nature of good economic advice”. Therefore, there is a tendency to believe that the basic democratic practices of seeking consensus and compromise are a waste of time, and in their place, technocratic governance is recommended.

Lastly, at the level of *structural constraints*, while many African democracies have inherited heavy national debts and messy fiscal affairs (ibid:130), with respect to SAP negotiations, they also inherited fixed targets or restrictions on policy instruments that had been agreed between the IFIs and the “old” governments and were presented to the new democratic governments as non-negotiable (ibid).

4. Dynamics of Conflict: Economic Deprivation, Nationalism and Political Violence

In Chapter 2.1 we described the increasing political tensions in Côte d'Ivoire in the 1990s, manifest in violent disputes about citizenship, land rights, and eligibility. We saw how the political elites have politicized nationality and how xenophobic sentiments have grown in the population following the Ivoirité discourse. In this chapter we will discuss possible explanations of this increased nationalism and accompanying political tension. Why did the leadership of the major political parties choose increasingly to rely upon nationalistic rhetoric and politics of exclusion, and why did they succeed in getting support for this from the public? While most analyses of Ivoirité focus on historical tensions between ethnic groups and personal political tactics and power struggles, we will in addition look at how changes in economic and social conditions can help illuminate both elite strategies and popular response.

The discussion is organized around the theoretical perspectives presented in Chapter 3, namely, primordialist, instrumentalist, and institutional approaches to ethnicity (4.1), economic changes and relative deprivation (4.2), and changes in political accountability (4.3).

4.1 Ethnic Tensions?

The perception of the Ivorian conflict as an ethnic conflict not only relates to differences between “nationals” and “foreigners” and between “southerners” and “northerners”, but also to generation-old tensions between the Baoulé and the Bété, particularly in the forest zone, which have been highlighted as a root cause of the conflict (see Chapter 2). The aim of this section is to discuss to what extent theoretical approaches to ethnicity, as presented in Chapter 3.1, are useful tools to understand the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire.

4.1.1 “Ancient hatreds”

Difficult relationships between population groups are not new in Côte d’Ivoire. Western regions have a long history of conflict between the original population and migrants from other parts of Côte d’Ivoire (see Chapter 2). Some scholars argue that ethnic identities and a history of ethnic antagonisms characterize the Ivorian society and are key factors to understand the current crisis. Jeanne Maddox Toungara (2001:64f.) describes the development of nationalism, xenophobia, and tensions on the basis of the country’s demographic characteristics and ethnic identities:

“Since independence in 1960, there has been little change in the way the peoples of this small West African nation perceive themselves. Foremost in their psyches is their identity as members of regional extended-family and corporate kin groups competing with others for their share of scarce economic resources...”

Explanations that use ethnic or other family-based identities as the starting point for understanding social phenomena, characterize the primordialist school. A primordialist view holds that conflicts between groups are the result of antagonisms that are based on ethnic affiliation and have been built up over the years.

Conflicts over land in the forest zone of Côte d’Ivoire are often described by old antagonisms between groups. However, Jean-Pierre Chauveau, who has studied the land question in Western Côte d’Ivoire, argues that the frequent land tenure conflicts between locals and non-Ivorian migrants must be analyzed in light of institutional changes following the economic crisis. Institutional arrangements like the “tutorat” or guardianship between locals and immigrants has traditionally ensured the influence of the state and at the same time regulated the relationship between locals and migrants and between rural and urban populations (Chauveau 2003). With the economic crisis, the complex institutional arrangements that had previously ensured stability were threatened.

In Chauveau's view, these institutional arrangements have contributed to shaping people's sense of identity. This approach poses a problem for a primordialist understanding which would see identity as given, not as subject to influence from institutional or other factors. Chauveau's arguments will be discussed further in Chapter 4.2.2.

In the last decades, ethnic group belonging has also become an important identity mark in urban areas. A simple "ancient hatreds"-explanation fails, however, to explain why these identities have become politically explosive only in the last decade. While it might be true that people in Côte d'Ivoire have always identified themselves with their ethnic group, why have these identities only recently broken out in violent conflict?

4.1.2 Elite manipulation

While primordialist perspectives on ethnicity are rare in debates on the Ivorian conflict, analyses which lie close to instrumentalist perspectives are more widespread. In fact instrumentalist perspectives on ethnicity seem to fit very well with the dominating analyses of the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, focusing on manipulations of identity by the elite through what we have called the Ivoirité discourse.¹⁶ According to an instrumentalist view on ethnicity, ethnic conflict appears when political leaders see it in their interest to enhance ethnic sentiments. In Côte d'Ivoire the three leaders after Houphoët's death, Bédié, General Gueï, and Gbagbo, have all used their version of Ivoirité as a political strategy, whereas Ouattara of the RDR has also mobilized almost exclusively on identity to gain support from the large group of "northern" Ivoirans. The politics of Ivoirité and the justifications used by its proponents have been described in Chapter 2. Here we want to discuss why and to what extent these policies –and the conflict itself –can be explained by instrumentalist perspectives.

¹⁶ A word of caution is due here on the relation between ethnicity and nationalism. Ivoirité is about nationalism –a sense of belonging to the Ivorian nation, regardless in principle of ethnic affiliation. However, as we showed in Chapter 2, the "intellectual" basis of Ivoirité as defined by Bédié and CURDIPHE, is closely linked to Akan identity and to "the 4 ethnic groups original to CI". Moreover, Ivoirité is interpreted, not only by international observers, but also by Ivoirans, as defining ethnic divisions. This is especially true of those who feel excluded by the term, but even by Ivoirans who define themselves within Ivoirité, one can find this interpretation. Accordingly it is hard to draw a sharp distinction between

While primordialists see ethnic identities as a priori given, instrumentalists see them rather as political phenomena that may change according to social and political change. This understanding of ethnicity can be useful in the analysis of ethnic policies in Côte d'Ivoire from the early 1990s. While Ivoirité in Bédié's version built upon and reinforced Akan identity, Gueï's and Gbagbo's versions included the non-Akan groups of the West, and created a dichotomy between "the south" and "the north", both of them incorporating very diverse groups.

Bédié's choice

Ivoirité served several political purposes for Bédié. Importantly, it served as an ideological argument to oust his strongest opponent, Alassane Ouattara. Furthermore, by starting an anti-foreign rhetoric, Bédié countered a challenge from the FPI and Gbagbo, who had been the first to use this type of rhetoric for political purposes, in their attempt to deprive foreigners of the vote in the 1990 elections. Bédié thereby "stole" one of Gbagbo's potentially mobilizing causes. Lastly, Ivoirité served to legitimize Bédié's accession to power and the hegemony of the Akan group in government (Jolivet 2003:48). The Ivoirité rhetoric can also be seen as a theorization of the rights to the increasingly scarce national resources. (Akindès 2004:20).

Gueï's choice

General Robert Gueï, in coming to power after the military coup in December 1999, vehemently criticized the ideology of Ivoirité and the corruption of his predecessor's government, and announced a "cleaning of the house", involving far-reaching replacements in strategic sectors like the army and the public administration. However, after only a few months in office, Gueï's tactics changed. He increasingly used a xenophobic language and, without using the word Ivoirité, adhered to many of its principles. At the same time he left his earlier promises of leaving politics after the "cleaning of the house" and started positioning himself as presidential candidate. It

national and ethnic identity, and we therefore find it justified to treat Ivorian nationalist policies as ethnic policies, although this involves a certain simplification.

was General Gueï who organized the infamous “and-or” referendum, which resulted in the limitation of the eligibility to those who had two parents from Côte d’Ivoire.

In Gueï’s version, Ivoirité was not the Akan project it had been from Bédié’s side. Gueï, himself a Krou, attacked Akan political dominance and spoke strongly for the importance of giving up narrow ethnic interests in the favor of the national interest; this was necessary to allow himself to be elected president. His nationalist project was thus less exclusionist (and less “ethnic”) than Bédié’s project as far as it included all groups of the southern part of the country. It was, however, strongly exclusionist towards foreigners and the populations of northern Côte d’Ivoire. It was claimed that foreigners had a “hold over vital sectors in the national economy”, and at the same time the “Ivorianness” of the northern populations, commonly referred to as “Dioula” was questioned. Dioula actually refers to one particular ethnic group, but the term is widely used as a common name for several ethnic groups in the northern Côte d’Ivoire, who are historically related to groups Mali and Burkina Faso and are traditionally Muslim. Religion was also used to exclude: In addition to “foreigners taking over the economy”, it was warned that Muslims would “take over” Côte d’Ivoire –a “traditionally” Christian country.

Gueï’s sudden shift from morally denouncing Ivoirité to adopting a slightly modified version of it, demonstrates, in the view of most observers, how he was pursuing his own personal gains, and trying to prepare his own accession to the Presidency. This also seemed to be the interpretation of many Ivorians, who turned his back on the man in whom many of them had put their hopes to “clean the house”.

Gbagbo’s choice

Laurent Gbagbo and the FPI have often been criticized for “abandoning their principles” when failing to break with the Ivoirité ideology from Bédié. However, we have seen that the nationalism in FPI had its own history – dating from before Bédié started using the term Ivoirité. The use of xenophobic rhetoric and policies on the FPI side was a born out of the struggle against the one-party regime, when the opposition wanted to rid the PDCI-friendly foreign population of their voting rights. Gbagbo

wanted to be seen as the one defending ordinary Ivorians' interests in face of the single party elite and of foreign interests, be it French "neo-colonial" interests, World Bank and IMF "Western imperialist" interests or the interests of other West African countries and their nationals residing in Côte d'Ivoire. Furthermore, Alassane Ouattara's role in the repression of the opposition, while he simultaneously was seen as an "IMF boy" (Jarret and Mahieu 2002) and a Burkinabè, added to FPI nationalism.

From the FPIs side, its xenophobic policy developed in parallel with a deep criticism of the economic policies of the PDCI regime. The FPI opposed the ruling party's French-oriented policies, and wanted to loosen French grips on the Ivorian economy. At the same time, they were deeply skeptical of the economic reform policies promoted by the World Bank and the IMF. Their political argumentation was, and still is, an anti-imperialist, nationalist one.

Before the 1995 presidential election, however, Gbagbo chose to ally with Alassane Ouattara in the *Front Républicain* to counter the power of Bédié and the PDCI. This was a radical shift in more than one sense: He allied with the person who to many was the personification of the "foreigners' influence" in Côte d'Ivoire, which he himself had been attacking. Furthermore, the leader of the socialist party and of the broader movement of the left now allied with the republican party, which was seen by many as an "ultra-liberal" party, although the RDR itself has always claimed to be in the "center" politically. Gbagbo's choice to align with Ouattara caused a split in the Ivoirian left: Many were disappointed of the fact that Gbagbo had abandoned his old allies on the left and the broader movement and no longer saw him as their leader. This tactical move from Gbagbo thus contributed strongly to give Ivorian politics the characteristics of a personalized power-struggle; or what in French is called "*la politique politicienne*".¹⁷

¹⁷ This expression can be translated "*the politics of politicians*" and refers to a situation where the power struggle between politicians dominates politics, isolated from the *content* of politics.

So, you see, there is a strange situation, where the FPI is directly with the RDR. And the classical opposition, the ideological opposition, the revolutionary left, no longer exists...In the end, the opposition becomes a purely tactical opposition.

Konaté Sidiki 2004 (interview)

In tactical alliance with Ouattara, Gbagbo advocated strongly for Ouattara's right to stand for election, attacking the Electoral Code as "anti-liberty, racist, xenophobic and dangerous" (Jeune Afrique 1796, 1-7 Dec. 1994, cited in Crook 1997: 229). Gbagbo, who was acknowledged as the leader of the alliance (the *Popular Front*), probably saw this as his only chance to mobilize against Bédié, and the price he had to pay was to support the RDR in its fight against the Electoral Code of December 1994 and support for more inclusive eligibility and voting legislation (Crook 1997: 229). As late as October 1999, Gbagbo stated:

"We have to let everyone present themselves ... We cannot have in Côte d'Ivoire, quarrels, struggles, and civil wars because someone wants to be President or someone wants to stay President"

Laurent Gbagbo October 20, 1999, quoted in Le Pape 2002: 22

It is also important to note that it was Bédié who had limited the vote to citizens and introduced the *Carte de séjour*; and it was Gueï, not Gbagbo, who, after a referendum, changed the article 35 in the Constitution limiting the eligibility for the presidency to citizens with both parents from Côte d'Ivoire (the "and-or" referendum). Gbagbo might have won the elections in 2000 as a result of this legislation, but it was not he who had made it. However, once in power, Gbagbo took advantage of the new situation and once again openly denounced Ouattara's candidacy:

“I am shocked that someone who has been Vice President of the Central Bank of Western African States in the capacity of Upper Volta, official of the IMF for Upper Volta, I am shocked that he is candidate here”.

Laurent Gbagbo, March 20, 2000, quoted in Le Pape 2002: 32

Ouattara's choice

Most analyses of ethnic politics in Côte d'Ivoire confine themselves to the ethnic and nationalist policies led by the persons and parties in power, namely Bédié, Gueï, and Gbagbo. Here we want in addition to look at the “other side”: how Alassane Ouattara and his supporters used identity as a means of mobilizing political support, and hence contributed to the “ethnitization” of politics.

The RDR, originally founded by disappointed PDCI supporters who disagreed with the party's economic policies and party culture, soon found their major source of support in the population of the northern regions. Responding to the Ivoirité discourse and capitalizing on the growing sentiment in the North of social and political exclusion, the RDR chose to focus their political mobilization on groups that were inclined to feel victimized by these policies.

The discontent and feeling of exclusion in the north and among immigrants and Muslims was not created by Ouattara and the RDR, but was probably enhanced by them. As early as 1992, two years before the RDR broke out of the PDCI, a “*Charter of the Grand North*” had started circulating, which claimed better political representation from the north (Akindès 2004:18). Ouattara managed to canalize a great deal of this discontent into support for himself. In the words of Venance Konan, commentator in the leading newspaper *Fraternité Matin*:

“He sent –he was intelligent too- he had a good team, they went to the countryside and said: ‘They exclude you, but if you vote for Mr Alassane Ouattara, he will rehabilitate you... Every time they beat a Muslim, it gave ten votes to Mr Alassane

Ouattara. When they destroyed an identity card of someone, that gave ten more votes to Alassane Ouattara. That's how all the North gathered behind him."

Vénance Konan 2004 (interview)

As long as Ouattara was excluded by law as a presidential candidate, the decision of the RDR to boycott the elections should not surprise, as long as the party was indeed founded as a means to further his candidacy. Although, as Crook notes, Ouattara never confirmed that he wanted to pose his candidacy - and it is very possible that he could actually have been able to do so if he had decided to try the Electoral Law before the High Court (Crook 1997:228) - he might have considered that the chance of "playing the martyr" would serve him in the long run and was the best option given the dominance of the PDCI over the election process. Ouattara seemed, like his opponents, to prefer the focus on identity politics to that of other political issues. In the run-up to the 1995 elections, the RDR took up the "inflammatory language of the Charter of the North, talking darkly of Baoulé domination, tribalism and the possibility of civil war" (ibid: 229).

"[The Republican Front] did not at any point enter into any debate about the merits of its programme for government, but seemed to assume that the supposed exclusion of Ouattara from the elections was sufficient justification for people to support the opposition".

Crook 1997: 230

In summary, all the three post-Houphouët leaders used Ivoirité – although in different versions – as a tool for their own personal and political gain. Ouattara, although he did not use ethnicity in the same way as his opponents, also used the focus on identity politics to his own gain.

So far instrumentalism seems to be proven right: To judge from the political strategies of the political leaders, their primary goals have been political power, and "playing the ethnic card" has been a useful strategy to that end.

The question that remains, however, is how the space has been opened up for a personal power struggle to dominate Ivorian political life since the late 1990s. Are the death of Houphouët and the selfish political strategies of his successors sufficient explanations to the shift from stability to violent conflict? Both the choices of the political leaders and their “success” in provoking ethnic sentiments seem to need further explanation.

4.1.3 An institutional approach

In Crawford’s institutional approach, ethnic conflict is seen as the combined outcome of a historical politicization of ethnicity, the weakening of the state, and the exploitation of ethnic identity by political entrepreneurs. Chapter 4.1.2 has shown how political entrepreneurs have exploited cultural identity in Côte d’Ivoire, and how these strategies have destabilized the country. In this Chapter we move one step back and ask how this manipulation of identity has become possible: Can Crawford’s ideas of historical politicization of ethnicity and the weakening of the state contribute to our understanding of the flourishing of ethnic politics?

The historical politicization of identity

The institutions of the central state in post-Independence Côte d’Ivoire in general has not favored the politicization of ethnicity, and until the 1990s the country has had inclusive citizenship criteria, which according to an institutional approach would weaken the political relevance of cultural criteria (Crawford 1998:21). Nevertheless ethnicity has played a role in the political formation of the country. According to Tessy Bakary, the colonial powers created a simplified hierarchy between the ethnic groups, placing the Agni and other western/central groups at the top, above the Senoufo and the Dioula (north), with the Bété and other Western groups at the bottom. Bakary argues that this colonial construction of an “ethnic reality” contributed to a partition of the country opposing east and west (Bakary 1992:116). The formation of The African Planter’s Union, of which Félix Houphouët-Boigny was the president and which was the forerunner to the PDCI, marked a

“*baoulisation*” of the Ivoirian society, meaning that the Baoulé ethnic group of the center was becoming economically dominant (ibid:125f).

Although Houphouët was very conscious to integrate representatives of all ethnic groups into the political system, hence containing open ethnic conflicts, ethnic affiliation still played a role in the highly personalized political management of the country and thus held a potential to be politicized.

A weakened state

According to Crawford, globalization and the domestic political response of economic liberalization have led to the weakening of state institutions and a decrease in state legitimacy in a number of countries. This weakening in turn opens up the space to ethnic entrepreneurs. The question is whether the emergence of “ethnic entrepreneurs” and their “success” in mobilizing ethnic policies in Côte d’Ivoire in the 1990s can be explained as a response to the state’s weakened grip on the society.

In the first two decades after independence, the Ivorian political elite maintained a strong hold on power with the combined help of steady economic growth, a certain economic distribution and favorable external circumstances. With the economic recession and growing debt, coupled with stronger pressures for democratization from outside, the old strategies for maintaining power did no longer hold, and new strategies were needed. One of the simplest means of state power, namely state resources, which were systematically used to “buy” political support, drastically diminished. Accordingly, the political elite sought new ways to maintain their power, including increased authoritarianism. To the general public this may have been experienced rather as a strengthening than a weakening of the state. It was, however, also a manifestation that the elite was losing control and had to use increasingly repressive measures to keep control. This can be seen in the turbulent years around the transition to multipartyism under Houphouët, as well as in Bédié’s presidency.

As we saw in section 3.1.3, Crawford argues that globalization and liberalization deprive the state of a) the possibility to uphold the social contract, through reducing its role in the economy, and b) the possibility to repress dissent. With the state left with less legitimacy and less repressive power, the space is opened up for ethnic entrepreneurs. The first point, namely the effect of declining policy space of the state due to externally induced liberalization programs, is discussed in more depth in Bonnie Campbell's analyses of adjustment in Côte d'Ivoire. She describes the paradox that although the liberalization programs led to the halving of official cocoa and coffee producer prices between 1988-89 and 1989-90, political debate did not focus on this but on who would succeed Houphouët-Boigny. The liberalization programs left politicians with little choice in economic policy matters, while the nature of the programs themselves caused dissatisfaction, making it difficult to build cohesion (Campbell 2003:8). The response of the power holders was to reorient political debate into "ethnic politics": While the PDCI accused the FPI of being an ethno-regional party with narrow local interests in mind, the FPI portrayed the PDCI as a "cover for domination by the President's ethnic group, the Baoulé" (ibid.)

According to Crawford, resource scarcity may tempt the political elite to privilege particular groups because they no longer can afford to uphold general welfare policies and because patronage networks as allocative mechanisms require few transaction costs (Crawford 1998:25). Diminishing resources would hence lead to increasing patronage. In Côte d'Ivoire, Bédié increasingly favored his ethnic group Baoulé – and did so in a more apparent and explicit way than had his predecessor Houphouët. This may be interpreted as a response to diminishing distributive capacity. Deprived of his predecessor's possibility to "buy support" from a nation-wide constituency, he chose to focus on a Baoulé constituency, so that they, at least, would continue to support him.

Crawford describes this logic for "new or fragile democracies":

“With regard to the institutions of representation in new or fragile democracies where resources are scarce and the legacies of ethnic machines still linger, the requirement for electoral support may provide more of an incentive for political entrepreneurs to make extremist appeals that promise more benefits to the targeted ethnic group than for them to make moderate appeals to a wider population.”

Crawford 1998: 25

Finally, the “bandwagon effect”, where ethnic politics from one political actor reduces the cost of ethnic policies for others and thus provokes an ethnic response from opponents, has also been present in Côte d’Ivoire. Bédié’s resort to Ivoirité may in part be explained by his need to counter the challenges of FPI’s nationalist strategies. Both Gueï and Gbagbo have “answered” the Ivoirité discourse, which they claim is an Akan project, by advancing ethnic sentiments in their own ethnic constituencies (Yacouba and Bété respectively, both from the west). To Alassane Ouattara, the strategic response to the nationalist and exclusionist policies of the PDCI was to focus maximally on the ethnic aspect (“I am excluded because I am a northerner/a Muslim”) and build his support on the image of a victim of exclusion rather than on a political program.

The decline of the neo-patrimonial state

In this perspective, political crisis results from a crisis of legitimacy following the collapse of the neo-patrimonial distribution model. Thus, the “success” of the Ivorian model is attributable not only to the authoritarian governance of Houphouët-Boigny and his support from the French, but also to his ability to create support based on a selective redistribution of resources. However, with the economic crisis that deprived the state of resources, coupled with reform policies that denounced neo-patrimonial practices as corrupt, this mode of redistribution was put under attack. The patrimonial source of legitimation was thus removed without being replaced by other adequate sources of legitimation.

Houphouët-Boigny’s rule has often been described as a typical example of neo-patrimonial rule, where modern bureaucratic institutions are combined with the use of

patron-client relations ensuring the control of the personal ruler (Crook1989:206). Through different strategies, Houphouët used the state's economic resources to secure his political support. An expansion of the public sector served the need for control and made possible the alliance-building and the cooptation of potential political opponents needed to maintain the total authority of the ruler.

Accounts of the decline of the neo-patrimonial state leading to warlordism, as well as related descriptions of the criminalization of the state (Braathen et.al. 2000, Reno 1998, Bayart et.al 1999) typically use as examples countries very different from Côte d'Ivoire, like Liberia, Sierra Leone and Congo, where conflicts have been spurred by the rivalry over natural resources (mainly minerals and oil) and warlords building their political power on control over these resources. Moreover, political institutions in Côte d'Ivoire are relatively well developed and have not been subject to the total "state collapse" described by Reno (Reno 1998:1). These explanations should thus not be uncritically transferred to the Ivorian case, where conflict dynamics have been different. However, the perspective of the neo-patrimonial state does shed light on the legitimacy and governance crisis of the Ivorian state, where liberal reforms have attacked the old platform of legitimacy, opening the way to destabilization and conflict.

4.1.4 Summing up: Is the Ivorian conflict an ethnic conflict?

Instrumental perspectives on ethnicity can be useful in highlighting how identities related to history, community, and religion have been tactically used and manipulated for purposes of personal and political gain. An important contribution of the Instrumentalist school is the recognition that ethnic identity is not naturally given but rather formed by historical and political processes –some of which may be quite recent. In this sense, the south-north division that is now becoming more and more of a political reality in Côte d'Ivoire is a political construct created by the Ivoirité discourse and the simplistic discourse of Ouattara's supporters. Each of the two groups are composed of very different ethnic groups and have not seen themselves as part of the "north" or the "south" until quite recently.

The shortcoming of instrumentalist perspectives, however, is that they tend to ignore the importance of other identities than ethnic identities, and hence to underestimate the effect that economic and political factors may have on conflict, independently of ethnic politics. Hence, Chapter 4.2 shows how generations (in the forest zone) and the student community (in the cities) have been major non-ethnic identities through which conflict has been provoked.

Institutional perspectives on ethnicity are better equipped to grasp the complexity of conflict because they consider how economics, politics, and ethnicity interact. Thus the Ivorian conflict can be seen as the combined effect of a weakening of the state due to economic crisis, externally-imposed reforms and liberalization and ethnic manipulation by elites.

4.2 Economic Causes of Conflict?

The second group of explanations of conflict consists of economic explanations. Is conflict the result of dramatic changes in growth patterns and in people's living conditions? Can the flourishing of political violence in Côte d'Ivoire be interpreted as an outcome of the economic crisis?

We will approach these questions by applying the theory of relative deprivation to political developments central to today's conflict.

Recalling Gurr's theory, presented in Chapter 3, relative deprivation can be induced by one out of three developments; namely *decremental deprivation*, where conditions worsen; *aspirational deprivation*, where expectations rise and conditions remain constant; or *progressive deprivation*, where a period of economic development is followed by sharp reversal (corresponding to Davies' J-curve).

The first part of the chapter deals with general trends of growth, poverty, and inequality. In the following two sections we have chosen to look further into two groups that were particularly hard hit by the economic crisis, and who reacted

violently; namely the students and the population of the forest zone. These two groups are the two groups where the militant nationalism is strongest today.

4.2.1 A miracle economy in crisis

As noted in Chapter 3.2.2, there is evidence of the statistical relation between economic development and violent conflict. Paul Collier et al, in their extensive quantitative study of civil wars, identify the “failure of economic development” as the key root cause of conflict (Collier et.al 2003). Obviously, however, poor countries are not doomed to conflict. Côte d’Ivoire, although among the world’s poorest states, is richer than most of its neighbors, including Mali, Burkina Faso, and Ghana, none of which have experienced violent conflict in the last decade. If we seek an explanation of the outbreak of violent conflict in Côte d’Ivoire in economic factors, we first need to take a closer look at actual economic changes, including changes in resource distribution and how economic changes have affected different groups. Secondly, we must examine the political repercussions of these changes.

Economic changes: Côte d’Ivoire in a comparative perspective

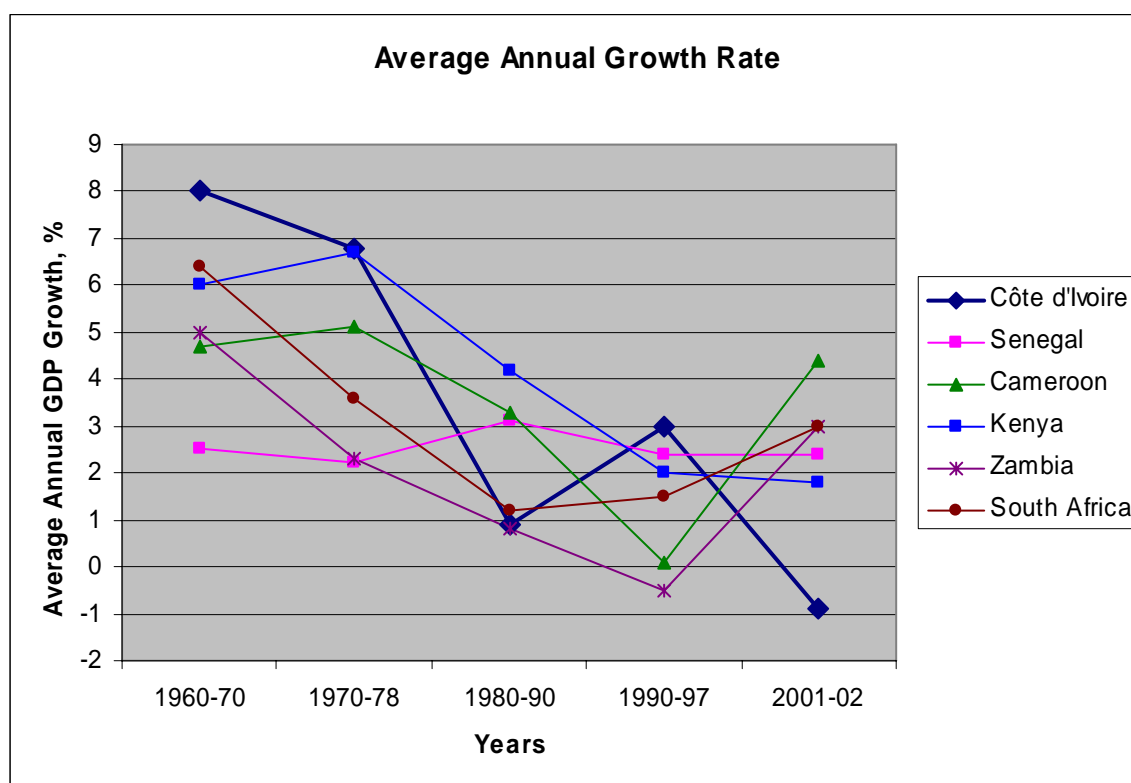
To put economic developments in Côte d’Ivoire in a comparative perspective, we have chosen to compare changes over the last 25 years in a number of African countries on some essential indicators. The development in economic growth is identified to show how the economic situation in the country has changed, in comparison with other countries. Furthermore, we look at trends in poverty. More than comparing the countries on actual levels of economic growth or poverty, we are interested in comparing the countries’ *changes over time* on these indicators.

Figure 2 shows the Average Annual Growth Rate for six selected African countries. Côte d’Ivoire had an average growth rate of 8% in the years 1960-1970; while for the years 1980-1990 the rate had dropped to 0,9 (Figure 2.) Although all our selected countries except Senegal experienced reduced growth over these two decades, in none of the other cases is the deterioration as severe as for Côte d’Ivoire. The fall in the growth rate was particularly sharp from the 1970s to the 1980s. The reduced growth levels reflects the deteriorating terms of trade for primary commodities and a

growing debt crisis which hit most African countries in the 1980s. The figure suggests that Côte d'Ivoire was harder hit than other countries by this crisis.

For the years 1990-1997, on the other hand, Côte d'Ivoire saw a return to a relatively high growth rate (3%), unlike the other countries. This probably reflects a positive development of cocoa and coffee prices in the period, as well as effects of the 1994 devaluation of the CFA Franc. The growth rate fell sharply again, however, in 2001-2002, again untypical among our selected countries, which in general experienced stabilization or increase of growth. The rate for 2001-2001 is unlikely to be affected by the September 2002 rebellion, but is, on the other hand, likely to be influenced by general economic uncertainties after the 1999 coup d'état.

Figure 2: Development of GDP growth in six African countries, 1960-2002



Source: World Development Report

Figure 3 shows the development of extreme poverty, defined as the percentage of the population living on under 1\$ a day¹⁸, for the same countries.

We see that Côte d'Ivoire started off with very low absolute poverty in 1981, lowest among the six countries. Extreme poverty rose, however, to 11% in 1990 and 20% in 1999. While Côte d'Ivoire has significantly less extreme poverty than most of the other countries throughout the period, the steady increase in extreme poverty is dramatic. Moreover, it is reasonable to believe that the increase in extreme poverty is accompanied by a general rise in poverty, even for groups who come above the one dollar a day limit.¹⁹

The gradual rise in poverty shown by the figure is compatible with the theoretical notion of decremental deprivation, where conditions deteriorate over time. According to the theory, such a development creates frustration and may give rise to rebellion. One should of course not interpret this mechanically, for example by interpreting the rebellion in 2002 as a direct consequence of rising poverty. However, a dramatic increase in poverty over time may have given rise to protests and a growing level of social discontent, decreasing the trust in policymakers and increasing the general level of tension in the country.

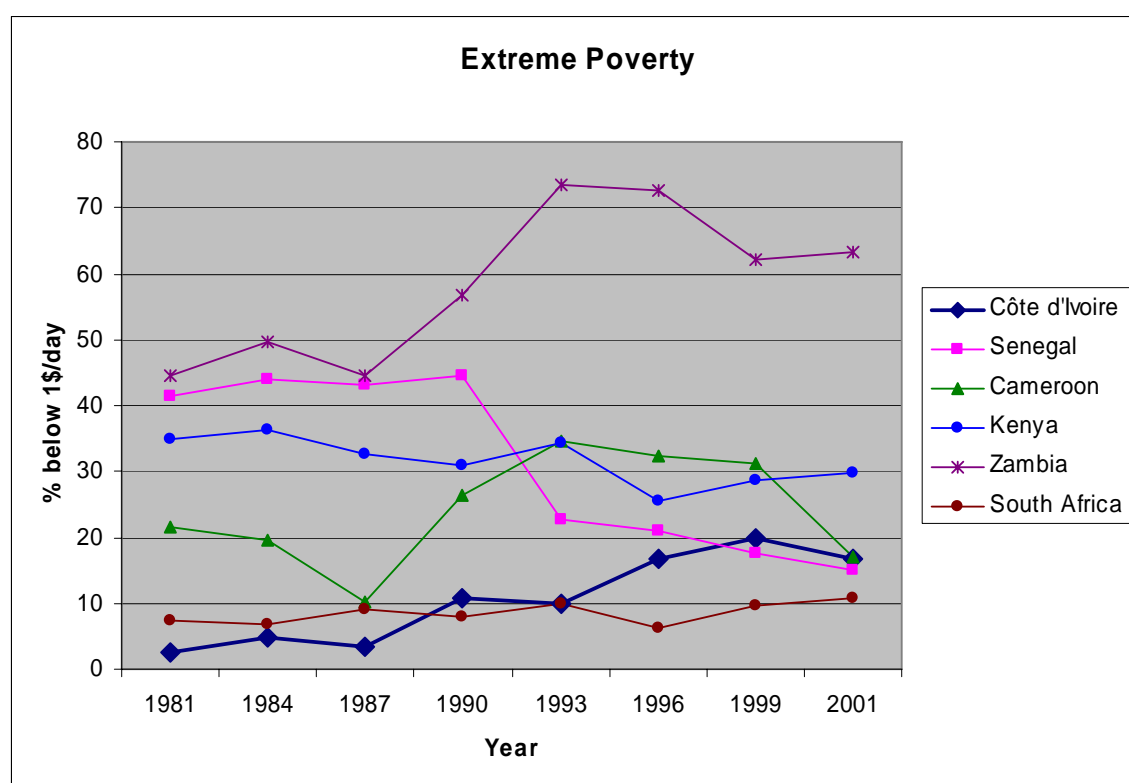
The increase of poverty moreover meant that poverty spread to areas not previously hit by it. The increase was particularly high in the cities and in the West Forest (Kayizzi-Mugerwa:5). While the areas with the highest poverty are rural (particularly the Savannah in the northern part of the country, the *increase* in poverty has been higher in urban than in rural areas. The increase in poverty has been particularly marked in Abidjan, rising from 0.7% in 1985 to 5.1% in 1993, 20.2% in 1995, before declining to 11.1% in 1998 (UNECA 2005). Michael Grimm et.al found that average real monthly wages of civil servants fell by 44% in Abidjan and 56% in other urban

¹⁸ The one dollar a day standard is an international measure of extreme poverty used by the World Bank and other institutions. The poverty line is measured in 1993 international prices and adjusted to local currency using purchasing power parities (PPPs)

¹⁹ Statistics that show the development of the two dollar a day-poverty line over the period are not available

centers from 1985 to 1995 (Grimm et.al 2001:8). They further found a strong increasing poverty trend in urban areas in the same period, then a weak declining poverty trend after 1995 (ibid.) Inequality also rose in the same period: In Abidjan the Gini coefficient increased from 0.34 in 1985 to 0.44 in 1995, dropping to 0.38 in 1998 (ibid.). Rising poverty in urban areas may be more politically destabilizing than in other areas because urban dwellers are more exposed to wealth and have more political resources.

Figure 3: Development of extreme poverty in six African countries, 1981-2001



Source: PovCal Net

It seems plausible to apply a combined perspective of decremental and progressive deprivation on developments in Côte d'Ivoire in the 1980s. On the one hand, the real depreciation of economic conditions was significant, causing increased poverty and harshened living conditions. On the other hand, this depreciation happened after two decades of fast and steady growth, having created the expectation of further growth. People in Côte d'Ivoire had learned to see themselves as better off than other

Africans. There existed a pride in the “Ivoirian Miracle” and a stated expectation, both from the country’s own elite and from the outside world (particularly the French) that Côte d’Ivoire would continue to prosper. This expectation made the sudden deterioration even harder on the population, and even more politically explosive.

Figure 3 shows a particularly sharp increase in poverty from 1987 to 1990. For the period 1985-1988, Grootaert has found that per capita household expenditures fell by almost 30% (Grootaert 1993:1524). The growing political tension and violence from 1989 should be understood on the background of these developments.

The effects of general negative economic trends were aggravated by policy measures with sudden and far-reaching effects. These were related to the culmination of the economic crisis and the following increased role of the International Financial Institutions from 1989 onward.

By 1989 the public sector deficit had reached unprecedented levels, whereas the foreign debt was rising. The need for reform was evident, and the World Bank and the IMF demanded drastic measures. While the Ivorian government up until then to a certain degree had been able to resist and manipulate the adjustment policies, now the leverage of the IFIs increased and Houphouët had to accept dramatic measures. The Price stabilization fund was running large deficits, and the Ivorian government finally gave in to World Bank and the IMF demands that the price guarantee be abandoned, causing a price drop of cocoa and coffee of 50 percent. Early in 1990, public and private sector salaries were cut by 20%, and the University teachers’ salary by 50% (N’Da 1999: 65-67).

In the following years the government led an unprecedented austerity policy to reduce their budget deficits. Public enterprises were dissolved, throwing former workers into unemployment (Jarret and Mahieu 2002:24). Jarret and Mahieu argue that the growing unemployment had a negative effect on the state’s economic results,

contributing to its inability to repay debts. Not surprisingly, the unemployment also led to rising social tensions (ibid.). In order to be able to pay its debts, the state reduced spending, particularly in the fields of health, education and housing (ibid.) Jarret and Mahieu further note a movement from the formal to the informal sector, as people whose enterprises failed moved into the informal sector.

In the same period, Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) and private loans towards Côte d'Ivoire diminished, whereas official loans as well as aid increased, leading to a heavier dependence of the state on the IFIs.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire at the start of the 1990s found itself in a deep economic crisis that questioned the whole idea of the "Ivoirian miracle". Poverty and unemployment were rising and created frustration, and the PDCI regime was losing its economic means of governance and faced a legitimacy crisis. As the IFIs became more directly involved in policymaking, it became harder for the government to maintain a public perception that they were in control.

The rising nationalism should be interpreted in light of this economic and political crisis. At the elite level, the recourse to Ivoirienness has been interpreted as a strategy to avoid economic discussion in a situation of crisis (see 4.1.3). On the popular level, poverty, as well as "relative deprivation", may create the need for scapegoats. To investigate the last point, we have chosen to take a closer look at two groups who were hard hit by the economic crisis and reforms, and who reacted violently.

First, we will take a closer look at dynamics in the forest zone, where depletion of resources as well as liberalization policies affected both local and immigrant populations and spurred latent conflicts between them. Secondly, we will look at the students, a previously privileged group who was hard hit by economic reforms and who reacted violently.

4.2.2 The land question

The question of the right to land is one of the most disputed issues in Ivorian politics today. The Rural Land Law, passed by the Bédié government in 1998 but equally welcomed by the opposition (Chauveau 2000:2f), reserves rural land ownership to Ivorian citizens. Following this Law conflicts in rural areas of Western Côte d'Ivoire intensified, leading to the evacuation of thousands of Burkinabè from the south west of the country (ibid.).

Under the “houphouëtian system” the income of cocoa and coffee producers were regulated through the Price Stabilization Fund, which saved exports income in times of high world prizes and draw on these resources when prices sank. The producers were hence protected from fluctuations in world prices and enjoyed a guaranteed price for their products. However, as cocoa and coffee prices plunged in the 1980s, this stabilization policy was no longer sustainable as the Stabilization Fund was depleted of funds. In 1989 the government accepted the IMF demand of liberalization of prices paid to producers, and coffee and cocoa prices paid to producers were halved. Other agricultural support policies were also abandoned.

The economic crisis caused important changes in the social and political conditions in the rural areas, not least in the forest zone of the country, the area of most of the country's cocoa and coffee production. The area has been a receiver of successive movements of immigration since colonial times. In the 1930s, the colonial authorities encouraged the settlement of people from Upper Volta in the Center West of Côte d'Ivoire to develop coffee and cocoa production for export (Chauveau 2000:4). As immigration increased, settlers moved west through the forest region in a “pioneering front” (ibid.). After Independence, the government led a systematic policy of developing forest-based cash crops in the west and south-west, and migration increased further (ibid.) Conflicts over land rights between “natives” of the west on the one hand and Baoulé as well as foreign immigrants on the other have been frequent in the area, where the government has typically taken the side of the immigrants. Up to the 1990s these conflicts were contained by political compromises,

but from the 1990s violent conflict intensified dramatically, as part of the general rising level of tensions in the country.

Chauveau describes the rural crisis as consisting of three components; the crisis of the pioneer model of production, a crisis of governance (or what he calls “governmentalité” to distinguish it from the more politically charged “gouvernance”), and finally, and partly springing out of the other two, generational tensions (Chauveau 2003:1f). The following outline of these three conflict components is based on Chauveau (2000) and Chauveau (2003).

The crisis of the pioneer model of production

The “pioneer model” of agricultural production was based on a number of favorable conditions such as easy access to labor through immigration, modest needs of capital, state support in the forms of subsidies, credit etc, and a general policy favoring rural development, for example through the Stabilization Fund (Caistab), and through encouragement of migration towards the forests zones. The necessary funds were provided through indirect taxation of agricultural production through the Caistab, through international aid, and through debt. But beyond these economic factors the system also relied on a set of informal institutional mechanisms, based largely on informal relations and patterns of influence. These mechanisms served to uphold traditional law and undermine formal law, according to which “the land belonged to those who cultivated it”. Informal institutions, supported by the state, thus balanced the relationship between “autochtones” and “allogènes”, admitting more rights to the “autochtones” than did formal legislation.

One of these institutions was the traditional institution of “tutorat” (guardianship) between local people and migrants, where the recipient of a land loan or “sale” maintains a permanent debt of gratitude towards his “guardian” who becomes his “patron”, even if the newcomer is far richer (Chauveau 2000:11). Guardianship passes down from generation to generation and involves the financial support for funerals, assistance in times of financial hardships, etc. According to Chauveau, the tutorat was instrumentalized by the state to persuade local authorities to receive

immigrants from the Center and the North of Côte d'Ivoire and from the neighboring countries.

This model of exploitation of forest resources successful in 1960s and 1970s, but it was based upon presumptions that made it fragile to the structural changes that occurred in the following decades.

The liberalization policies in the rural areas included a massive and brutal abandoning of agricultural support policies (Chauveau 2003:7). We have seen that the cocoa and coffee prices were halved in 1989. In Chauveau's view, the economic crisis in the forest zone contributed to making visible the relative success of the migrants, thereby highlighting the question of land occupation by foreigners. This led to the stigmatization of the migrants, and particularly of the Burkinabè, as scapegoats of the rural crisis.

The rural governance crisis

Chauveau argues that during the 1960s and 1970s, the abundance of resources led to what Mamdani calls "Decentralized Despotism" (Mamdani 1996).

Governance in the rural area depended on a clientelist network of "political agents", or middlemen between the central authorities and the rural population. These middlemen could be party officials, traditional chiefs, or representatives of "resident organizations", which organized people of the same cultural community. They implemented stated policies and simultaneously secured the local anchoring of the state – and they profited materially, politically, and symbolically on their role as middlemen. Their political and economic situation thus depended on their position in the state/party, which again depended on their presumed representativity in their community. But their representativity in the community again relied upon the social capital that they possessed locally, and their social capital depended on their ability to mobilize state resources.

The legitimacy of this “clientelist circle” was assured by the redistribution of abundant resources, generated from an accelerated exploitation of forest resources with the support of the international financial institutions.

Chauveau further argues that there existed a “historical compromise” which regulated the conflicts around the right to land. In exchange for price and sales guarantees, as well as rural development policies in general, the rural population provided total support for the one party state and its agents, and for the agents’ extraction of rents from the agricultural production. One component of this compromise involved the immigrants in particular, who benefited from a protected access to land in exchange for electoral support. However, the compromise also included young people in the rural areas who benefited from education and help to establish themselves as agriculturalists.

The economic crisis naturally led to a crisis of this system of governance, since the system so directly relied on economic resources. With land resources diminishing simultaneously with state resources, the redistribution of political and agricultural resources met local resistance. As land resources diminished, the “autochtones” started to question the state’s protection of immigrants’ rights to land, especially of the Baoulé immigrants, as both presidents Houphouët and Bédié were accused of unjustly favoring their own ethnic group.

The reduction of resources to distribute pushed the local agents of the state to play the ethnic card in order to secure their own position. This reduced their legitimacy and thus the legitimacy of the entire political system.

The legitimacy crisis resulting from the diminishing of public resources to distribute did not lead to the search for an alternative to the clientelist regime. The political competition for control over diminishing resources on the contrary came to provoke regionalist and ethnic policies around the question of citizenship.

It is on this background of decline in legitimacy that we must interpret the legislative measures that were taken in field of land from the end of the 1980s. As the state lost legitimacy at the local level the success of public interventions could no longer rely on political compromises like it had done in the 1960s and 1970s, and the state opted instead for legislative reforms, negotiated within the political class. From 1989-90 the Rural Land Plan was launched, which aimed to secure rights that had previously been obtained because of tradition. In the Rural Land Law of 1998 Bédié clearly denounced the houphouëtian principle of “the land belongs to those who cultivate it” and restricted the right to acquire land to citizens.

Generational tensions

The economic crisis in urban areas, including vast youth unemployment, also had repercussions in the rural areas. The 1980s saw a substantial “return movement” to the countryside, especially of young people. These were rural youth who had studied or tried to make a living in the cities, and who returned because of difficulties in finding employment in the cities. Even urban youth whose parents had migrants from rural areas to the cities “returned” to their area of origin to try to make a living. These people often ended up in conflict with the original population, even of their own families, who were not always willing to sell them land, and often preferred to rent or “sell” land to immigrants. These young people, having been exposed to wealth in the cities without being able to succeed there, had high expectations at their return, and experienced as particularly unjust that they were denied access to the land of their ancestors. The generational tensions also spurred inter-group tensions as the young returnees often directed their frustration at the immigrants. Young immigrants, on the other hand, simultaneously became a vulnerable group as the traditional land rights, which had secured the land rights of their parents, were threatened.

The land question: A case of relative deprivation?

The “crisis of the pioneer model of production”, which can be called the economic aspect of the crisis, illustrates a case of decremental deprivation, where conditions worsen for the majority of the population. Instead of directing their discontent against political authorities (as would be predicted by Gurr), the local population targeted the

immigrant population, with whom relations had been tense for a time. The “governance crisis”, on the other hand, points to a political aspect of the crisis, and shows that economic explanations can not be used in a deterministic way. The economic and political aspects of the rurality crisis are, however, intimately linked, and it is the resource scarcity that leads to the crisis of the governance model.

The generational crisis may be interpreted in the light of aspirational deprivation. Young people who had been living in the city had been exposed to the wealth and opportunities of the city, while both the student life and the studies themselves may have provided them with great expectations for the future. They were then met with a double disappointment: first, of unemployment, then of the denied access to land upon returning to their home areas. It is the frustration created by this kind of gap between expectations and reality, more than poverty in itself, that gives rise to violence.

4.2.3 Student mobilization

The students, together with the University teachers, were probably the one group hardest hit by the economic reforms. A privileged group in the 1970s and early 1980s, the students experienced a sudden and dramatic deterioration of studying and living conditions. Study grants, free housing and transport facilities were abolished. At the same time the educational quality was threatened as teachers’ salaries were halved over-night (Messou) and general spending on higher education was neglected as a result of the economic crisis. Evidently, such a dramatic deterioration of students’ conditions provoked vehement protest. But the students, more than campaigning narrowly for their own group interests, saw their struggle as part of a wider democratic struggle against the PDCI regime and against the harsh economic reforms imposed upon the country by the IMF and the World Bank, with the collaboration of the sitting regime. The universities became the main arena for development of violent opposition to the PDCI regime and the single party system, where students worked together with the Teachers’ Union Synares led by Laruent Gbagbo, and later with the FPI.

The Fesci (*Fédération Estudiantine et Scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire*) was created in 1991 as a federation of several student organizations, and soon became an all-dominating movement on campus. While some former Fesci activists claim that the organization worked independently of political parties for students' interests, cooperating with several opposition parties (Moussa 2004: interview), the dominating view among analysts as well as those involved in the movement at the time, seems to be that it was intimately linked to the biggest opposition party. (Kouassi Yao 2004: interview; Konaté 2003) In the words of Kouassi Yao, sociologist at the University of Abidjan:

"[FESCI] was the secular branch of those who are today in power... They instrumentalized the youth, all the school and university students, for a political purpose."

(Kouassi Yao 2004: Interview)

Konaté Sidiki, today spokesperson for the New Forces (the rebellion), active in FESCI at the time, denies the direct affiliation to the FPI, but emphasizes that all the opposition movements worked together:

"So you had the oppositional block against the dignitaries of the ancient system; the PDCI against the other political parties: the FPI, the PIT, the USD, and... four big parties. And the FESCI of course. So we led the same battle. With the other organizations. In '90, we even took to the streets to support the candidacy of Mr. Laurent Gbagbo, today President of Côte d'Ivoire. It's important to understand. Because we had the same platform of demands."

(Konaté Sidiki 2004: Interview)

Whether one sees the student movement as cynically used by Gbagbo for his own political ambitions or as an independent political force, however, it is clear that the students themselves identified with a political and social struggle which would succeed through the election of a government of the left which would improve the

conditions not only for the students but for the whole population. The students' struggle became, however, in an exceptional way marked by violence.

History of the Fesci

At the time when Fesci was created, the University of Abidjan had been closed to any real ideological debate since 1982 (Konaté 2003:51). Before that, there had existed a certain freedom of expression and real ideological debate between people close to the PDCI and others who later became central to the FPI (among them Laurent Gbagbo).

In February 1982 a planned public meeting opposing Gbagbo and Bernard Zadi (USD) on the one side and Djédjé Mady and Jean-Jaques Béchio (both PDCI) on the other, was banned in the last hour, and massive student protest and police repression followed. The PDCI blamed the problems on ethnicity, speaking of a “Bété complot” by Gbagbo, Zadi, and Pierre Kipré, president of Synares who had criticized the police's illegal interference at campus. After this event Gbagbo went into exile in France (ibid). The only political student organization was the Meeci, student branch of the PDCI, but towards the end of the 1980s the Meeci was increasingly being challenged by emerging radical student movements. Following multipartyism, Meeci was dissolved, and Fesci officially tolerated, but counteracted by the regime by the presence of “loubards” (“mobs” who worked for the government at campus) (N'Da 1999: 75-76).

The violent interruption by a group of loubards of a Fesci organized meeting – and the non-interference of the police forces present – preceded a series of violent clashes between the students and the police culminating in the events at Yopougon Students' Residence in May 1991. The following month, one of the loubard leaders, Thierry Zebié, was beaten to death by the students (ibid:76 ff.)

Fesci increasingly took control over different aspects of life at Campus. Using slingshots and home-made pepper-grenades, they ordered students to leave classrooms when they organized strikes, and left little space for those who did not agree to their policies (Konaté:2003). In June 1991 Fesci was banned, and the

General Secretary Martial Ahipeaud thrown in prison. The organization thus operated clandestinely for three years, until 1994 (N'Da 1999, Sidiki 2004). This may well have contributed further to their radicalization and increasing use of violence.

According to Konaté Sidiki, Fesci was less afraid to take courageous positions against the government than were the political parties, because the students, unlike members of the opposition parties, who were often civil servants and afraid of sanctions, the students had nothing to lose (Sidiki 2004). Yakouba Konaté emphasizes the unity of the students as opposed to the parties of the left, who were often lost in leadership quarrels (Konaté 2003:52). Fesci thus had a leading role in the opposition, while clearly they enjoyed the support of prominent people of the older generation, like Synares President Marcel Etté, FPI President Gbagbo, and PTI President Francis Wodié.

Other former militants, however, charge the FPI of having tactically infiltrated the student movement and manipulated the students' struggle to their own gain. Jean Blé Guirao, Fesci president 1995-96 and now leader of the youth of UDPCI²⁰, claims that from 1998, when Blé Goudé took over the presidency from Guillaume Soro, the movement was manipulated by Gbagbo to make it "a movement at the service of the FPI." The movement left its practice of organizational democracy and became totally dominated from above. He also feels betrayed by the university teachers (among them Gbagbo) who he saw as allies and mentors of the students from the beginning of the 90s.

"In the same way that Gbagbo stole my youth, Synares stole it too."

Jean Blé Guirao 2004: Interview

Student mobilization and civil war

Can today's conflict be traced to the culture of violence developed in the student milieu in the early 90s, in conditions of sudden social deterioration, ideological

²⁰ Union pour la démocratie et la paix en Côte d'Ivoire, created in 2001 by supporters of General Robert Gueï

struggle, and political oppression? The majority of the Fesci activists have not quit doing politics, but we find them today in most of the political movements, from the New Forces, to the RDR, and, most importantly, in the Young Patriots and other pro-government militia movements issued directly from the Fesci.

Scholars like Yakouba Konaté are among those who have argued that the crisis starting in September 2002 has revealed the political role of the youth and in particular the University students. According to him, the rebellion and the ultra-nationalism responding to it can both be seen as parts of a culture of violence prevalent at the University since 1991 (Konaté 2003:49). The leadership of the rebellion and the militia both consist largely of former Fesci activists. Soro Guillaume, leader of the MPC²¹ and the New Forces, was president of Fesci from 1995 to 1998. He was succeeded by Blé Goudé, (Fesci President from 1998 to 2001), who is now heading the Congress of Young Patriots, leading among the militia movements. Fesci President in an intermediary period in 1994-1995, Eugène Djué, is leading the Movement for Total Liberation of Côte d'Ivoire, another of the militia movements, and Touré Moussa Zéguen, Secretary General of the militia movement *Groupement des patriotes pour la paix* (GPP) is likewise issued from the same milieu. Konaté Sidiki, spokesperson for the New Forces, was also active in Fesci.

Student violence: A case of relative deprivation?

One of the reasons that the students became subject to the most severe budget cuts, was of course that they were a particularly privileged group at the outset. One might argue that it was only fair that they, for example, instead of having their own, free, transport system, should take the public bus like everybody else. Even though other measures were more serious, one could probably argue that the students, even after the cuts, were better off than most of the population. Relative deprivation is, however, about the discrepancy between what a group is capable of attaining and what they see themselves as “justifiably entitled to” (Gurr 1975: 25). It does not seem

²¹ Mouvement patriotique de la Côte d'Ivoire, one of the militia movements

strange that the sudden removal of privileges of the sort the Ivorian students experienced in the early 1990s provoked the feeling of deception, especially as they were being harder hit than any other group. Adding to the feeling of deprivation was, of course, the brutality the students were met with when they protested. The students' situation can be interpreted as a combination of aspirational and progressive deprivation. On the one hand, the students were a group with expectations for the future, which were suddenly being threatened. On the other hand, their current living standard was drastically deteriorating, corresponding to a situation of progressive deprivation.

4.3 Economic Reform and Political Protest

The privatization program launched in 1990 envisaged the privatization of about 60 state-owned firms, then about 75% of the public sector in terms of turnover, jobs, and value added. They included transport, food processing, telecommunications, energy, banks, publishing, tourism, public works and mining companies (AfDB/OECD 2004:116). The privatization processes have given rise to much contestation and allegations of corruption and patronage in the sales process. Sales to French companies have been particularly unpopular. Bruno Losch points out that although the cocoa sector, the strategic sector of the Ivorian economy, is dominated by American or European companies; it is the French who are targeted by nationalist reactions, particularly Bouygues and Bolloré (Losch 2003:54).²² The symbolism of ownership by companies from the former colonial power is strong. Moreover, Losch indicates that the antagonism towards these two companies is attributable to the fact that they profited from privatizations when Ouattara was Prime Minister (*ibid.*). At the time, Bédié led a campaign against these privatizations.

The cocoa and coffee sector was gradually liberalized during the 1990s until the total liberalization in 1999 when the Price Stabilization Fund was dismantled. The abandonment of support policies in 1989 led to the halving of prices and caused

²² Bouygues owns the water and electricity enterprises, whereas Bolloré dominates transports and industrial plantations.

increased poverty in cocoa- and coffee-growing areas, leading to the inter-group tensions described in Chapter 4.5.2. Cocoa- and coffee growers' income increased temporarily after the devaluation in 1994, but in 1999 prices again fell, coinciding with the final dismantlement of Caistab. The farmers were left extremely vulnerable and exposed to price fluctuations (International Labor Rights Fund, undated:5) According to the International Cocoa Organization, buyers sometimes pays way below official prices, and cocoa farmers, often illiterate small farmers who are poorly organized, are ill equipped to negotiate prices (International Cocoa Organization 2003:3). The liberalization of the sector also led to the consolidation among the cocoa traders, so that three major cocoa processors now dominate the market and together transform over 50% of the country's crop (ibid.)

Bruno Losch argues that before the final dismantlement of the Caistab, there emerged an oligopoly of firms, in alliance with foreign companies, which were supported by Bédié to counter the threat that liberalization posed to the state. The concentration of power that resulted led to a rapid increase in poverty and inequality (Losh 2000:12f).

The 50% devaluation of the CFA Franc was decided on January 11 1994, only a month after the death of Houphouët, who had vehemently opposed this measure long advocated by the World Bank and the IMF. Although Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan defended the measure as necessary to reverse the negative economic trends in Côte d'Ivoire and the other countries of the UEMOA, it was clear to most people that the devaluation was imposed by the international financial institutions (N'Da 1999:115f). The effects of the devaluation were ambiguous. On the one hand, the economy seemed to recover in the years following the devaluation: export incomes rose, the country's terms of trade improved significantly, and the budget deficit was reduced from 11.9% of GDP in 1993 to 6.5% in 1994 and 1.8% in 1998 (Garandeau 2002:5). In the short term, however, devaluation had some negative impact, especially in urban areas, as the prices of foreign purchases doubled, leading to budget strains as well as increased poverty in the cities (Kayizzi-Mugerwa 2001:5). Corbin Guedegbe describes how the devaluation exacerbated the crisis of the

education system in the CFA countries, as education material became more expensive and the conditions of the staff tougher, forcing many to take external jobs in addition to teaching (Guedegbe 2002:4). In the Ivoirian cities, the cheap labor from neighboring countries departed, as their earnings were halved with the devaluation. Coupled with the sudden departure of French, this had negative short-term effects on urban welfare, and caused protest (Kayizzi-Mugerwa 2001:5).

Urban poverty has risen proportionally more than rural poverty in the 1980s and 1990s. In the mid-80s poverty was mainly a rural problem, but urban dwellers have largely had to pay the price for budget cuts and restructurings linked to adjustment, and urban poverty has risen. At the same time, it has been increasingly difficult for youth graduating from University to find jobs in the civil service, as the number of graduates have risen in parallel with cutbacks in the civil service. Poverty, unemployment and a general decrease in living standards give rise to frustration and may spur political violence. In Côte d'Ivoire, this frustration, which initially was turned against the party in power (PDCI) and the IFIs, has been instrumentalized by the party in power and turned against the country's immigrants. There is, however, a link between on the one hand the "anti-imperialist" nationalism, directed at the IFIs, France, and the PDCI, perceived to be agents of these external actors, and on the other hand the current xenophobic nationalism. The role of Alassane Ouattara is the perfect illustration of the "two types" of nationalism and the way they have become mixed.

5. Major Findings and Conclusions

Political debate in –and on– Côte d’Ivoire is so dominated by personality struggles and “la politique politicienne” that it may seem like the conflict is all about a struggle over power between the major actors in the political elite and their strategies to manipulate the population. Yet while elite strategies have indeed played a major role for the evolution of conflict, people are not puppets who can simply be manipulated at will by their political leaders. We have tried to show how changes in the economic situation of the country have shaped elite strategies, and equally important how changes in people’s living conditions have affected political action in the population. Neither a purely elite-based approach nor a pure structural approach based on changes in material conditions can alone provide sufficient explanations of political breakdown. However, by identifying major economic changes and looking at political responses to them, we can come closer to an understanding of the relationship between economic change and political developments.

None of the three post-Houphouët leaders has achieved the political legitimacy needed to create a functioning democracy and political stability. The political destabilization in Côte d’Ivoire was triggered by the death of the “Father of the nation”, but also happened in parallel with serious economic problems and growing poverty. In fact, the political destabilization was under way even in Houphouët’s time, the announcing of multiparty elections being a clear sign of the weakening of the president, who had refused this option only months before.

While the economic upswing following the devaluation of the CFA Franc in 1994 provided Bédié with a certain legitimacy in the first years of his presidency, he was weakened by corruption scandals, negative growth trends since 1998, as well as growing criticism of his nationalistic profile. Robert Gueï enjoyed a certain popularity in the months following the coup d’état in December 1999, but disappointed many as he did not live up to his promises of breaking with Ivoirité and

putting an end to corruption, and as he, contrary to his promises, posed himself as presidential candidate. Gbagbo abandoned his position as leader of the broader opposition movement of the left already in 1995 when he joined the Republican Front, and has further delegitimized himself by his strong anti-foreign policies. Gbagbo is probably the one who has been most “successful” in mobilizing political support on a nationalistic political program. In doing this, however, he has not only delegitimized himself in the eyes of other parts of the population and heightened the tensions; he has also chosen to base his support almost entirely on nationalistic policies and turned away former political allies in the democratic movement.

The political choices of the three post-Houphouët leaders have brought national identity to the front of the political scene. This has delegitimized the leaders themselves and the entire political system in the view of those excluded, but it has also turned political debate away from other political issues of major importance to the population, such as economic development, poverty, and corruption, a development which may further delegitimize the political system. On this last point, Alassane Outtara, the fourth major political personality of the country, who has not yet succeeded to become president, has chosen the same political focus although from a different position.

We have analyzed these political strategies in the light of economic developments and reforms. In the following we will summarize how economic reforms have contributed to shaping elite strategies as well as political responses from the opposition and the public.

5.1 Political Consequences of Economic Reform

During the first decade of adjustment, where focus was on macroeconomic reform, the programs had few visible political implications. Towards the end of the decade, however, tensions grew as the World Bank and the IMF demanded drastic reforms that directly affected the lives of people.

First, the policies of austerity put forward by the financial institutions favored the introduction to multipartyism, because their effects were so unbearable on the population that they provoked an unprecedented pressure for change. While the effect of political liberalization in itself is judged by most as positive, however, political analysts and political actors alike tend to describe these events as destabilizing in the total. When talking about the transition to multipartyism, none of the political actors or analysts interviewed used the words “democracy” or “democratization”, and they tended to describe these developments as more negative than positive (Nyamien Messou N’Guessan 2004, interview, Venance Konan, 2004, interview).

The protests were directed simultaneously towards the World Bank and the IMF and towards the government, although the government naturally was seen as the prime responsible for the crisis. The government was blamed for creating a situation of crisis which necessitated drastic reform measures as put forward by the financial institutions. For a short time after the introduction of Alassane Ouattara as an economic advisor, there even existed a hope in the Ivorian opposition that this IMF official would “tidy things up” in the corrupt practices of the government (Blé Guirao 2004, interview). Very soon, however, Ouattara became immensely unpopular, and simultaneously the popular perception of the IMF and World Bank deteriorated.

In the view of Jarret and Mahieu, the World Bank and the IMF exercised a maximum degree of influence over Côte d’Ivoire during what they call “the government of the IMF boys”.²³ (Jarret and Mahieu 2002:30)

While the economic crisis was already threatening the old system of legitimation and reducing policy space, the intervention of the World Bank and the IMF in 1989-90 deprived the state further of political choice and revealed the almost total lack of autonomy of the Ivorian state (ibid.). Jarret and Mahieu describe the economic failure of the “IMF boys” as largely due to their democratic incapacity (ibid.:30f). Alassane Ouattara’s identification with the IFIs is likely to have contributed to his

²³ 1990-1993; the years when Ouattara was Prime Minister

unpopularity. Without doubt, his IMF past contributed to his image as a “foreign intruder”.²⁴ The introduction of nationalism in the political left around 1990 further was a defensive reaction to Alassane Ouattara as a “foreign intruder” in Ivorian politics as well as to the strategic use of the immigrant population by the PDCI.

The destabilizing effect of the Ouattara government was, however, not only a direct effect of the unpopularity of the government itself, but in addition an effect of the reduced policy space for this government. The “maximum degree of influence” over the country described by Jarret and Mahieu implies a weakening of the state that is likely to be destabilizing in the long run. There seems to be little doubt that the influence of the IFIs in this period had the effect of weakening the state’s capacity to make independent policy choices. This was one step in the gradual delegitimation of the state in the eyes of the public, a process that cannot be explained simply by the death of Houphouët.

Economic reforms were a major area of contestation in the years following the first multiparty elections, and contributed to the radicalization of the student movement and the broader movement of the left. The most contested reforms were in the education sector, including cuts in teachers’ salaries, attacks on student welfare, and stricter requirements for admission to higher education and for entering the civil service for university graduates. But other reforms related to liberalization and privatization efforts were also controversial issues.

For the students, deteriorating living and studying conditions were a direct result of World Bank-induced reforms. They gave rise to a movement of opposition that developed into a violent and increasingly nationalist movement. Following Yacouba Konaté and Kouassi Yao, we see the extreme expressions of violence in today’s conflict as partly attributable to a culture of violence that developed at the University of Abidjan in the early 1990s.

²⁴ ”In the beginning it was like: ‘A financier, he comes like that from New York, he wants to disturb us here, he doesn’t know the country...’” (Konate Sidiki 2004: Interview)

However, it is not obvious that the development of this culture can be blamed on the economic policies imposed by the World Bank and the IMF. No doubt, the main reason for the early radicalization of Fesci was the brutality with which they were met by the regime. Their militancy was also, as we have seen, very much a campaign to get rid of the sitting regime and to achieve democracy. Yet if we are to take seriously the Fesci militants' claim that they were campaigning for student welfare, it seems obvious that the rights they were fighting to protect was under attack as much from the IFIs as from the regime itself. The student welfare aspect of the protests was also the reason why they had so broad support: Even children of PDCI supporters protested when their study grants were removed.

5.1.1 Elite level: Ethnic manipulations

At the elite level, the political strategy of Ivoirité can be seen as a strategy from the political elite for avoiding discussion over economic matters. While each of the actors in the political elite have had their own specific political goals and specific strategies to meet these goals, all of them have seen a political discourse centered on national identity as advantageous to their own position. The economic crisis created a situation where the political leadership was increasingly faced with social discontent and protest, and new strategies were needed to maintain political support.

From the PDCI elite's perspective, Ivoirité was a response to a situation where the state, and thus the party, was losing its position as provider of peace and welfare for the people. Unable to live up to the position the party had made itself and which also enjoyed foreign support (particularly French), the party needed new strategies, and the answer was a radicalization of Houphouët's idea of Ivorian "uniqueness".

From the FPIs side, its xenophobic policy developed in parallel with a deep criticism of the economic policies of the PDCI regime. The FPI opposed the ruling party's French-oriented policies, and wanted to loosen French grips on the Ivorian economy. At the same time, they were deeply skeptical of the economic reform policies

promoted by the World Bank and the IMF. Their political argumentation was, and still is, an anti-imperialist, as well as xenophobic, nationalist one.

The RDR from the outset profiled themselves on economic liberalism and public sector reform, but soon turned their focus to the political and economic exclusion of foreigners and the “North”, capitalizing on the growing discontent among immigrants, northerners, and Muslims.

5.1.2 Popular level: Deprivation and protest

At the popular level, the increased level of protest and political violence is clearly related to decreasing standards of living following the economic stagnation. Reform policies in many instances aggravated the negative impact of the economic crisis. In accordance with the notion of progressive deprivation, continued growth for two decades had created an expectation that Ivorians would not experience poverty and social problems to the extent that the countries’ neighbors did. The shift from growth and relatively high living standards to stagnation, weakened welfare policies and increasing poverty created frustration and provoked social unrest. This is particularly true in the cities, where extreme poverty had been practically non-existent but from the late 1980s became a serious issue. Through the use of the Ivoirité discourse, popular discontent and protest has increasingly been channeled into ethnic and nationalist violence. However, the anti-imperialist aspect of the conflict surfaces frequently, as in the November 2004 anti-French demonstrations that led to an almost total evacuation of European citizens.

In the forest zone, the liberalization in the cocoa and coffee sector increased poverty, bringing to the fore tensions between locals and immigrants. Poverty rose, living conditions deteriorated in relation to expectations and to past levels, and the aggression was turned towards the relatively economically successful immigrants, who were perceived to have been unjustly privileged by the government. Moreover, generational conflicts arose as young people returned to their villages after failing to find employment in the cities. This group faced a double disappointment: First, higher education and exposure to higher living standards in the cities had created an

expectation of a standard of living that they were unable to obtain as they graduated and could not find jobs. Second, upon returning to their villages, they faced problems in gaining access to what they perceived as “their” land, as the older generation preferred selling to immigrants. Following Chauveau, we see today’s high level of tensions in the forest zone as partly a result of the economic crisis and particularly of the liberalization of the agricultural sector. Economic and social crisis in the cities further accelerated rural conflict, as returned city dwellers became a destabilizing factor.

Recalling Figure 1 in Chapter 1.3, we expected economic developments and structural adjustment to influence political legitimacy and stability through three intermediate variables: a) ethnicity and neo-patrimonial distribution, b) poverty and inequality, and c) political accountability. Concerning the first, economic crisis brought to the fore tensions between different ethnic groups as well as between locals and immigrants, like what happened in the forest zone. Most importantly, the economic crisis limited the policy space for political leaders and left the choice of ethnic and nationalist policies as an attractive basis on which to build political support. Beverly Crawford’s institutional perspective on ethnicity, highlighting the globalization and liberalization policies’ effect of triggering ethnic policies, illustrates well what has happened in Côte d’Ivoire in the 1990s: When the state was deprived of economic resources, it was also deprived of its primary tool for upholding a social contract and thereby stability. Crawford focuses the role of “ethnic entrepreneurs” in these circumstances, e.g. representatives of unprivileged groups who threaten the weakened state through ethnic policies; however, in Côte d’Ivoire, power holders themselves have also profited on ethnic policies. Neo-patrimonial patterns of distribution along ethnic and other informal lines, as well as the option of “buying” political support through the use of state resources, were attacked both by the economic crisis itself, and by liberal economic reforms. Looking at the second variable, poverty and inequality, the economic crisis enhanced poverty. The increase in extreme poverty was particularly strong between 1987 and 1990 and between 1993 and 1996 (see Figure 3, Chapter 4.2.1). While poverty spread to urban areas in the

early 1990s, unpopular reforms reinforced the feeling of deprivation. Coupled with frustration of a political elite that went clear of the negative impacts of the crisis, this caused social discontent and protest. Finally, political accountability has been threatened above all by the adjustment reforms. The weakening of state institutions resulting from the attacks on public spending and state bureaucracies, left the state with weakened capacity to manage the challenges caused by economic deterioration. The negative impact of economic crisis and restructuring may hence have been aggravated by the simultaneous weakening of state institutions brought by increasing dependency of external institutions.

5.2 The Limitations of Economic Explanations

While this study has pointed to effects of economic crisis and deprivation on political destabilization, economic factors are not sufficient explanations of political breakdown. Effects of economic changes on political stability are necessarily mediated by political choices, which cannot be explained on the basis of economic factors alone. Thus elites respond to the economic situation of the country, but still make a choice of strategies to meet the economic challenges. Likewise, while great changes in living conditions are likely to cause public reaction, the form and reach of reactions depend on political opportunities and constraints and can vary greatly between societies and situations.

Elite strategies such as *Ivoirité*, which weakened political legitimacy and destabilized the Ivorian society, were responses to a legitimacy crisis caused by economic degradation, but were, equally important, the choice of political leaders. In face of weakening state institutions and a reduced capacity to formulate political projects, leaders chose the “easy option” of appealing to ethnic and nationalistic sentiments. Likewise, while popular protest and violence were responses to an economic and social crisis, the character of the protest, particularly the nationalistic form that political action took, was the result of historical patterns of migration and political and institutional legacies of domination, privilege and conflict, as well as of elite manipulation.

Are the mechanisms of relative deprivation leading to violence that we have seen in Côte d'Ivoire representative of countries experiencing dramatic economic degradation? In Zambia, extreme poverty rose from 45 to 74 percent from 1987 to 1993 (Figure 3, Chapter 4.2.1). This is an extreme economic deterioration that did not produce a destabilization of the kind that has happened in Côte d'Ivoire. Trends in growth and poverty cannot alone explain political breakdown. Regime stability also depends on how the political elite manages the economic and social crisis, and equally important on the response of the opposition, civil society and other groups. Political strategies (both of the elite and the public) are influenced by many other factors in addition to economy, such as demographic factors, institutional factors, and political culture.

We have shown that economic conditions were important in shaping the elite strategies as well as the public political action that led to destabilization in Côte d'Ivoire in the 1990s. This does not mean, however, that a dramatic economic deterioration will necessarily lead to breakdown. Neither does it mean that conflict and political breakdown cannot primarily be caused by other factors. Rather, the analysis shows the importance of looking into the interconnectedness of economic, social, political and institutional factors. The Ivorian case illustrates that in order to understand political conflict we need to look behind appearances and analyze the economic and social conditions in which political strategies are chosen.

5.3 Implications for Policy

The study has shown that economic change and dramatic economic reforms can trigger political destabilization and conflict. Economic reform policies should hence not only consider their potential economic consequences, but also the social and political context into which reforms are to be introduced. A profound understanding of social and political dynamics is a prerequisite for successful reform. The potential for destabilization is neither a function of growth nor poverty, but depends on

changes in people's living conditions, changes in relations *between groups*, and of how economic changes affect existing conflicts.

The effects of political reform further depend upon the strength and legitimacy of the state and how these are affected by reform. We have argued that the high level of dependency upon the IFIs during the Ouattara government contributed to a weakened institutional capacity, leading to a delegitimation of the state that was destabilizing in the long run. The effect that reforms have on state legitimacy depends on the power relation between the state and the lending institutions. In the 1980s, the Ivorian state had considerable bargaining power in face of the IFIs, and was able to put off and to a certain degree manipulate the outcome of reform processes (Contamin and Fauré 1990). The strongest example of this was Houphouët's ability to avoid the devaluation of the CFA Franc during his presidency. Already from 1989, however, the severity of the economic crisis weakened the independence of the Ivorian state, and the IFIs got a much more direct role in policymaking. The abandonment of the agricultural price guarantee system, leading to the halving of cocoa and coffee prices, as well as severe wage cuts, were signs that Houphouët finally had to give in to World Bank and IMF demands that he had been resisting for a long time.

The weakening of institutions that we have shown as a consequence of IFI reforms should leave us extremely cautious to the effects of introducing reforms from the outside. Moreover, institutional strengthening should be a major priority of policy reforms, especially when other aspects of the reforms face the state with new political and administrative challenges. The current PRSP programs do put a stronger emphasis on institutional strengthening, capacity building and accountability than did the earlier structural adjustment programs. However, if these concepts are –or are perceived to be– defined externally, they might not get us very far from where we started. While accountability in itself is undoubtedly a valuable cause, it immediately raises the question: Accountability to whom? If governments are perceived to be more accountable to external actors than to the population of their countries, this

might well have the effect of weakening, instead of strengthening, internal political legitimacy.

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Appendix 1: List of Interviews

The interviews were conducted in February and March 2004, in Dakar (Feb. 17 and 18) and Abidjan.

Feb. 17: *Faliouo Ndiaye*, Department of Modern Literature, Faculty of Arts, University of Dakar

Feb. 18: *Amady Ali Dieuf*, Economist, Center for Applied Economic Research, Dakar

Feb. 24: *Nyamien Messou Nguessan*, President of Synares

With Mark Affilance Zamblé

Feb. 24: *Venance Konan*, journalist, *Fraternité Matin*

With Mark Affilance Zamblé

Feb. 27: *Francis Akindès*, Professor of Sociology, IRD

March 9: *Ori Boizo*, Member of Parliament, FPI and researcher at the IRD

March 11: *Blé Guirao*, President of J-UDPCI, Fesci President 1995-1996

With representative from the UDPCI

March 11: *Kouassi Yao*, Professor of History, University of Cocody

March 11: *Guedé Guina*, Major of Daloa Municipality, RDR

With representative from the RDR

March 11: *Konaté Sidiki*, spokesperson for the New Forces, former Fesci activist

With Yoro Bi Ta Raymond

March 14: *Touré Moussa Zéguen*, President GPP; former Fesci activist

With Yoro Bi Ta Raymond and three life guards

March 15: *Richard Doffounsou*, Resident Economist, World Bank, Abidjan

With Rigmor Skeie Koti, Norwegian Embassy in Côte d'Ivoire

March 15: *Alain Fabrice Ekpo*, Economist, IMF

With Rigmor Skeie Koti

March 15: *Kouakou Mathias*, Secretary General of PPS Youth, former Fesci activist

March 17: *Francis Guenon*, French Embassy in Côte d'Ivoire

March 17: *Nicole Doué*, member, RDR, former Fesci activist

With Yoro Bi Ta Raymond

March 19: *Olivier Tanoh*, Director, Division of Economic Analysis, Ministry of Finance

With Rigmor Skeie Koti

March 19: *Laurent Djaha*, Privatization Committee

March 19: *Prof. Ebagnerin*, Professor of Sociology, University of Cocody

March 19: *Mr Sernowitch*, Director, French Development Agency, Côte d'Ivoire

March 21: *Koné Zobila*, Economist, President of Scientific Council of Attac Côte

d'Ivoire, member of PCRCI

With Yoro Bi Ta Raymond

March 22: *Barthelemy Kotchy*, Atlantic University; former Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Cocody

March 23: *Lanciné Sylla*, Ministry of Administrative Reform; Political Sociologist; Honorary Dean of Faculty of Arts, University of Cocody

March 23: *Kouakou Kan*, BNTD

March 23: *Alexandre Assamien*, Ministry of Finance

Key informant: *Yoro Bi Ta Raymond*, Vice President of Attac Côte d'Ivoire; Office Manager at the PCRCI (Communist Revolutionary Party of Côte d'Ivoire)

Appendix 2: Structural Adjustment Programs in Côte d'Ivoire

Macroeconomic Programs:

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Program</i> | <i>Major Policies</i> |
|---------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1981 | PAS I (World Bank) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve instruments of macroeconomic governance and governance of public and para-public sectors - Public spending reductions, particularly in education sector - Augmentation of prices paid to agricultural producers - Harmonization of industrial import tariffs - Abolition of industrial import quotas |
| 1983 | PAS II (World Bank) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved control of state investments; abandonment of some unprofitable projects - Reform of public enterprises - Reductions of agricultural subsidies - Augmentation of prices paid to agricultural producers - Six sugar complexes shut down - Reform and cost reductions in housing sector |
| 1986 | PAS III (World Bank) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow-up of PAS I and II in public enterprises, agriculture, industry and housing - Reform of the energy sector |
| 1981 | Accord de facilité Elargie (IMF) | |
| | +6 confirmation agreements | |
| 1994- 1996 | FASR I (IMF) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VAT reductions - Wage reductions in public sector - Limitation of new recruitments in public administration - Privatization of public enterprises - Price liberalizations - Suppression of export subsidies - Promotion of private sector through new investments code, creation of an industrial restructuring fund etc. - Privatization of railways - Priority to primary health care - Reorientation of education expenses to primary education |
| 1998- 2000 | FASR II (IMF) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase in private savings - Further privatizations and reform of public enterprises - Further price liberalizations - improvement of health facilities, especially in rural areas |

Sector Programs (World Bank):

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Program</i> | <i>Sector</i> | <i>Major Policies</i> |
|-------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1989 | PASA | Agriculture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modification of price guarantee system for coffee and cocoa, halving of prices to producers - Reforms in palm oil, rice, (élevage), forestry, and cotton sectors |
| 1980 | PASE | Energy | Privatization of the Ivorian Electricity Company (CIE) |
| 1990 | PASEA | Water and Sanitation | Reform of SODECI (water) |
| 1991 | PASFI | Financial Sector | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State withdrew from banking sector - Liberalization of monetary policy |
| 1991 | PVRH | Human Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction of salaries for new teachers at primary, secondary and university levels - Reduction of student allowances - Restrictions on access to public administration for university graduates - Transfer of some university faculties to Abobo (Abidjan suburb) and Bouaké - Interruption of construction of Abidjan hospital - Fusion of ministries of health and education - Priority to generic medicines |
| 1991 | PASCO | Competition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved incentives for export - Deregulation of labor market - Simplification of procedures for creation of enterprises - Price liberalization (from 1994) - Abolition of Non-Tariff Barriers (from 1994) |
| 1994 | PAS-FI | Financial Sector | |
| 1994 | PAS-RH | Human Resources | |
| 1994 | CARE | Economic Recovery | |
| 1995 | CASA | Agriculture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Privatizations of rubber (1994-1995), wheat/flour (1995), palm oil (1996), sugar (1997), CIDT (1998) - Liberalization of coffee (1998) and cocoa (1999) - Gradual dissolution of the CAISTAB (completed 1999) |
| 1996 | PAS-DSP | Private Sector | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Judicial reform -Rationalization of customs system -Further deregulation of labor market -Export promotion |
| 1996 | PAS Transport | Transport | |

Sources: Kouakou (2004), Falle (undated), World Bank (1999)

Appendix 3: Heads of State in Côte d'Ivoire

| | | |
|-----------|------------------------|------|
| 1960-1993 | Félix Houphouët-Boigny | PDCI |
| 1993-1999 | Henri Konan Bédié | PDCI |
| 1999-2000 | General Robert Gueï | CNSP |
| 2000- | Laurent Gbagbo | FPI |

